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Believe me to be
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George Augustus Sala

Things I have Seen
and
People I have Known

BY

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

WITH PORTRAIT

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1894

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1894
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To

Sir Edward Lawson Bart.

To whose Suggestion and Counsel the Scheme
of this Work is due
In Memory of Thirty-seven Years
of uninterrupted Business Intercourse and
affectionate Friendship
I Dedicate these Pages.

PREFACE.

THIS book, I may respectfully remark, is not to be considered as constituting, in any sense, my Autobiography. I have been engaged for a long time past in writing an account of my own life; I am approaching the end of my task; and I hope that ere many months have expired, a work which I have contemplated for at least twenty years will be ready for publication. The following pages are only a collection of essays and sketches on the manners of my time, and reminiscences of the very many people in all ranks of society whom I have met. It has been occasionally inevitable that I should talk about myself in connection with the Things which I have witnessed and the People whom I have come in contact with; but I have done my best to present my own individuality only in the form of a peg on which objects of real interest might be suspended.

The courteous reader will scarcely fail to

observe that these papers abound with such parenthetical expressions as "I think," "I fancy," "I imagine," "I should say," "If I remember aright," "If my memory serves me correctly," "To the best of my knowledge," and so forth. These parentheses will not, perhaps, weary or exasperate my readers quite beyond endurance, when I tell them that the "thinks," "believes," etc., have been inserted purely for conscience' sake. I have never kept a systematic diary of what I have seen, what I have done, or what I have thought; nor, had I kept one, should I dare, perhaps, to publish it. It was the morbid whim of half-crazy Jean Jacques Rousseau to convert himself, figuratively speaking, into a bat, and to nail himself to his own barn-door for all the world to wonder, to jeer and to be disgusted at. These are not "Confessions"—they are confidences.

Drawing, then, but very slightly, on such intermittent journals as I have preserved throughout an active career of more than half a century, I have been forced to depend almost entirely on my own memory; and that

memory, always fallible, is at present, although not absolutely decayed, becoming slightly untrustworthy; and now, without the slightest vanity or conceit, but with the pardonable self-consciousness of a man who has worked very hard for a great many years, and who has always done his best never to pen a single line of which, when printed, he had reason to be ashamed, I should like to say something about the memory in question.

Over and over again have I been congratulated on the possession of an exceptionally retentive memory. I have no such gift; and were I endowed with it, I should take the observation that my memory was phenomenally retentive not as a compliment, but as an insult; because the being credited with a marvellously good memory amounts, in my opinion, to an obscure implication and insinuation that such knowledge of books as your writings display, is due, not to systematic and indefatigable study on your part, but to the mere fact that your abnormally retentive memory has enabled you to retain the contents of works at which you have only briefly and

casually glanced. I repeat distinctly that I have naturally, in many respects, an extremely defective memory. I never could remember proper names; I have a bad memory even for ordinary faces; and when I meet persons whom I have known in various parts of the world, I more often recognise them by their voices than by their countenances. In quotations, classical or otherwise, I have always been a confirmed and frequently ridiculous blunderer; and it is in consequence of the conviction that I do so blunder, habitually and absurdly, that when I am at home and writing leading articles or art criticisms, I labour in a study apart from my general library, and in which are stored at least two thousand books of reference, by means of which I can verify the facts which I cite, and refer to the pages of the authors to whom I make allusion. I will take at random just three shelves of this Library of Reference. Here is the first: The Bible, "Shakespeare," "Milton's Poems," "Encyclopædia of India," Quicherat's "History of Costume in France," Marryat's "Pottery and Porcelain," Norton's "Chartered Franchises of

London," Cassell's "Old and New London," "Gray's Inn: Its History and Associations," Jennings's "Anecdotal History of the British Parliament." Here is shelf number two: Wood's "Natural History," Foss's "Judges of England," "Pepys' Diary," Phillips's "Dictionary of Biographical Reference," Cowden Clarke's "Concordance to Shakespeare," Grego's "History of Parliamentary Elections," Seyffert's "Dictionary of Classical Antiquities," Pougin's "Dictionnaire du Théâtre," Milton's Prose Works, Butler's "Hudibras," Boutell's "Heraldry," "Burke's Works," "The Newgate Calendar," Admiral Smyth's "Dictionary of Nautical Terms," the "Terrific Register," and "The Wonderful Museum." Another shelf is devoted to the Scriptures in foreign languages; to Barrow, to Tillotson, to Jeremy Taylor, to Hooker, to Baxter and to Bunyan.

Then there are shelves full of dictionaries and polyglot vocabularies, grammars, provincial word-books, and the like. There are shelves full of books about horses; about Napoleon I. and his dynasty; about Wellington and Napier. There is a complete Cookery Library, full of

culinary manuals in a dozen tongues from the time of Queen Elizabeth to our own day; there are shelves devoted to Law, to Inventions and Mechanics, to Fine Art, and to *bric-à-brac;* and I declare that, in the course of every week, my unfortunate amanuensis is called upon to fetch and carry dozens of volumes, new and old, and turn up passages in them in order that I may be sure, humanly speaking, that I am not making glaring mistakes in that which I write. This labour is rendered necessary in the performance of the task which the outside public, sometimes good-humouredly, and sometimes contemptuously, calls "dashing off a leader." I remember that excellent man the late Charles H. Spurgeon, who was a frequent correspondent of mine, felicitating me once in bright, cheerful language, on the ease with which I "dashed off" the leaders in question. I thanked him in reply for his kind words; but I added that I should be very much pleased if he would pay me a visit some morning and sit in my study while I was laboriously dictating and not "dashing off" an article of, say, fifteen hundred words.

Such memory as, in the evening of my life, it is my fortune to retain, is not a gift of Nature. It is the result of a stern exercise of the Will, and of constant and systematic self-control and discipline. I believe and maintain that until your faculties are hopelessly decayed, through age or through disease, *you never really forget anything*;—that is to say, if you will only take the trouble to label and ticket, so to say, and store up everything you read in a particular pigeon-hole of your mind. I grant that the keys of the pigeon-holes get mislaid sometimes; but some unlooked-for page or phrase of association will enable you to find that key. The sight of an old print, the aspect of a house or a landscape, the strains of a melody, will often help you to recover the mislaid key and reopen the pigeon-hole and find the passage or the reference which has baffled you, perhaps, for months. I have essayed, in my time, almost every system of artificial memory; and I have found those systems, with scarcely an exception, to be always pedantic and not unfrequently imbecile humbug. The only aid to memory

in which I place the slightest faith is the habit of reading intently—*and reading with a pen in your hand*—taking note of the passages which most forcibly strike you. Never mind whether you consult your commonplace book often or seldom: it is the transcription of the passages which will chiefly assist you; and when you have so transcribed the extracts which have aroused your attention, sternly make up your mind that (D.V.) you are not going to forget what you have learned.

Now that I have liberated my soul from the imputation of possessing that which is usually known as "a good memory," my readers may not unreasonably wonder at my presumption in venturing to publish two volumes of papers, purporting to be reminiscences of things which I have seen and people whom I have known. How can I, with a normally feeble mnemonic faculty, recollect the things or the people, or a tithe of them, that I have written about in the seventh decade of my life? My answer will be a very simple one. I have a memory, but it is altogether peculiar. It is an ocular and graphic memory. To remember

a thing I must be able to see it clearly and distinctly in my mind, and to draw it either with a material or a mental pencil. My sight being at present very weak, I write as little as ever I possibly can; and the bulk of my work is dictated to an amanuensis who follows my speech, either in long-hand or with a type-writer. While I dictate, I keep on my knees a volume either of the *Illustrated London News* of many years ago, or of the *Vie Parisienne* of the early days of the Second Empire; or a volume of *Punch* published between the 'forties and the 'fifties, or the French *Illustration* of the same epoch; or failing these, a portfolio or scrap-book full of old engravings and drawings.

And while, with seeming listlessness, I am turning over these pictures of the past, or, as it sometimes happens, dipping into albums full of *cartes-de-visite* of statesmen, artists, warriors, men of letters, journalists, actors, actresses and ballet girls, the majority of whom have long since died, the memories come back to me thick and fast; and unconsciously I am finding the keys to the long-locked-up pigeon-holes; and

the things which I have seen and the people whom I have known come back to me, plastic, palpable and vascular. The grave gives up its dead; but the departed have no ghastly aspect and inspire no terror. If Providence has gifted you with a cheerful, hopeful, sanguine temperament, the older you grow and the nearer you approach the tomb, the more does Death lose its horror, and seem to you rather a friend than a foe. You hope that the day is mercifully near when you will meet again all the dear ones whom you have lost; the friends, the kindred, even the enemies whom you have long since forgiven. Perhaps *you* were in the wrong, when they despitefully used you; perhaps it was only an error—a blunder—a misapprehension—which can be cleared up on the day when there shall be no more darkness. Over and over again have I said that I do not believe in Death; that decay and dissolution are only the beginning of a new phase of Life; that Death is only a Door that veils the light which is eternally beyond; and that as the door approaches nearer and nearer to us, our old eyes can see the light beaming

through the keyhole and streaming over the threshold.

Whether the things and the people that I have gossiped about—not, I hope, ill-naturedly—will present any interest to modern readers, it is impossible for me to predict, with any tolerable approach to certainty, or even to surmise. One of the most difficult things for an elderly man to know is the precise period at which he has become an Old Bore. The younger portion of my readers may ere they have perused fifty pages of this work, have arrived at the conclusion that I am a very ancient bore indeed; yet there may be a certain proportion of elderly and middle-aged persons who may like to be reminded of the scenes through which they passed in their youth; of the events which they have witnessed, and of the more or less renowned personages with whom they were acquainted, or on whom they have set eyes. On the whole, I am induced to hope that a fair proportion of my readers will think me—with all my prolixity—worth listening to. Of my own personal struggles to attain distinction in the calling

to which I have devoted myself for more than forty years, I have said scarcely anything in these pages. My real life-history I reserve for the Autobiography already mentioned.

Nevertheless, it is something to be able to tell the present generation that I have seen Louis-Philippe, while he was still King of the French; that I have seen Soult, Thiers, Guizot and Lamartine; that I have witnessed three Revolutions in the French capital; that I followed Garibaldi in his campaign in the Tyrol; that I have heard Daniel O'Connell deliver a speech at the London Tavern; that I knew Lord Palmerston; that I knew the first Lord Brougham; that I was in the Franco-Mexican war and at the storming of Puebla; that I spent thirteen months in America when she was in the midst of war; that I was personally acquainted with Abraham Lincoln, with Seward, with Staunton, with Charles Sumner, with Bancroft the historian, with Longfellow and with Bayard Taylor, with Grant and with MacClellan, with Horace Greeley, Raphael Semmes, and Jefferson Davis. I have conversed, at Algiers, with the Emperor Napoleon III.;

I have been patted on the head by the great Duke of Wellington; I lived in Cuba when there were negro slaves there, and in Russia when there were millions of white serfs in the dominions of the Tsar. I can remember to have seen the Tsar Nicholas himself at Ascot races; I attended the funeral of the assassinated Alexander II. and the coronation of Alexander III.; I was in Constantinople when the first Turkish Constitution was proclaimed from the steps of the Old Seraglio, and I can hear now the unanimous shouts of "Amin" from the Moslem troops present. From the organ-loft of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, I have witnessed the funerals of the Duchess of Kent, of the Prince Consort, of the King of Hanover and of the Duke of Clarence. From the same coign of vantage I have watched the nuptials of the Prince of Wales and the Princess Alexandra of Denmark; of the Duke of Connaught and of the Duke of Albany. I saw the Coronation procession of her Majesty Queen Victoria, and I was in Westminster Abbey at the Royal Jubilee Service, and in St. Paul's Cathedral at the Thanksgiving

Service for the recovery from sickness of the Prince of Wales; and I beheld the second funeral of Napoleon the Great. I have seen twelve murderers hanged, including Rush and the Mannings. I have eaten the turtle of twenty-five Lord Mayors; and I was at the farewell banquet given to Charles Dickens prior to his second visit to America. Dickens and Thackeray were the friends of my youth, my editors in my maturity. I have been round the world and seen things and people in California and the Sandwich Islands; in Australia and New Zealand; in India and Ceylon. I have seen Macready, Charles Kean, Tyrone Power, the elder Farren, Charles Mathews, Madame Vestris, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Nesbitt, Rachel, Déjazet, Fréderic Lemaître act. I have heard Pasta, Malibran, Grisi, Persiani, Rubini, Tamburini, Lablache sing; and have seen Taglioni, Fanny Ellsler, Cerrito, and Duvernay dance.

I have watched for more than half a century the transformation of the British metropolis, and the wonderful changes which have come over the manners of the English people. I have noted, with exultation, the demolition of

no less than nine prisons in London alone—the Fleet, the Queen's Bench, Horsemonger Lane Gaol, Whitecross Street, the Clerkenwell House of Detention, Coldbath Fields, Tothill Fields, Bridewell, Giltspur Street, Compter and Millbank; and I hope, ere I die, to see foul old Newgate go by the board. There! Ill-conditioned folks may sneer at me for what they may be pleased to call my silly vanity in making mention in a preface of a few—very few—of the things which I have seen and the people whom I have known; but more generous-minded critics will, I trust, agree with me that a writer of gossiping reminiscences may, to some extent, be likened to the keeper of a house of public entertainment. I look upon this book as though I were the proprietor of a *restaurant;* and surely I am entitled to give something approaching the sketch of a bill-of-fare before I invite my patrons—the public—to walk in and partake of the social edibles and potables which I have provided for them. I cannot hope to please everybody. What is one man's meat is, we all know, another man's poison. Francis of Verulam

told us long ago that "some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested—that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read but not curiously, and some few should be read wholly and with diligence and attention." I shall be quite content if these pages are "tasted." I should prefer that treatment to their being "bolted," or swallowed, but without curiosity.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

2, *Eastern Terrace, Brighton.*

* * *

As these sheets were passing through the press, there came to me the distressing intelligence of the death of my friend Mr. Edmund Yates, whom I had known for nearly forty years. We had been associated in very many literary and journalistic enterprises. He was my sub-editor when I founded *Temple Bar;* and when I went to the United States in 1863, he became editor of that still prosperous magazine. More than once I have made mention of him—not unkindly, I hope—in these pages.

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THINGS I HAVE SEEN

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CHAPTER I.

THE REAL THACKERAY.

Anthony Trollope's "Life"—Thackeray and Mr. Edmund Yates—In the Painting-room at the old Princess's Theatre—A Salary of Fifteen Shillings a Week—Potter's Coffee-house, Long Acre—An Inscrutable Person—A Literary Proteus—The Deanery Club—Soyer's Symposium—A Second Meeting with Thackeray—Thackeray and the *Chef*—The Novelist and the "Professor"—The Beginning of Thackeray's Affluence—The Author's Time of *dolce far niente*—The Fielding and Reunion Clubs—Thackeray as an Adviser—His Conversation—An Accession of "Stand-offishness"—Starting *Cornhill*—Mr. George Smith's Banquets—Thackeray's Lecturing and After-dinner Speaking—Disconcerted by a "Hear, Hear!"—Launching *Temple Bar*—Thackeray on "Pilling"—Charles Sumner—Thackeray and Napoleon—A Final Reminiscence—An "Appreciation"—A Satirist, not a Cynic.

POSSIBLY it would have been discreeter had I suffixed a note of interrogation to the title of this chapter; since it is not unlikely that there may be a considerable number of persons who have intimately known William Makepeace

Thackeray, and who may be inclined to pronounce that the picture of the illustrious author of "Vanity Fair" which I propose to sketch does not represent the real Thackeray at all. *Homo duplex.* There may have been two Mr. Thackerays—nay, more. Assuredly the one whose individuality will always dwell in my memory, so long as that faculty lasts, is not the Thackeray drawn by Anthony Trollope, in perhaps the most uncouth and wooden appreciation of a mighty master of fiction, a mordant satirist, an accomplished gentleman, a most tender-hearted, charitable man, that was ever put forth by an eminent writer. It has often been said that no adequate Life of Thackeray has yet been written; and there are many reasons for this absence from our literature of a work which, were it sufficingly performed, would undeniably be of the highest literary value. Mr. Leslie Stephen, who, after the novelist's death, married one of Thackeray's daughters, and who edited the sumptuous *édition de luxe* of his works, was not, so he has told us, personally acquainted with him. Trollope only came in contact with him late in life. Most of

his early associates in *Fraser's Magazine* predeceased him; and had biography been the forte of Charles Dickens, the famous compeer of the author of "Vanity Fair" could have had but little to say—even if he had the inclination to say it—touching the early life of an author who on the whole, I fancy, entertained a much more enthusiastic admiration for Dickens than the author of "The Pickwick Papers" did for him.

Paradoxical as it may seem, I really think that, were I asked to name the most competent person to write a Life of Thackeray, I should at once indicate Mr. Edmund Yates. That gentleman has certainly little cause to love the memory of the amiable but too sensitive man of genius who, for the quite insufficient reason that Mr. Yates had been guilty, in the columns of an ephemeral publication long since forgotten, of a breach of social etiquette which at the present day would be deemed laughably harmless, put forth his giant's strength to crush and ruin, socially speaking, a writer many years his junior, and one who was just beginning to make his mark in letters. At the period when the great Garrick Club *polemos* broke out, Mr. Thackeray

was some forty-four years of age, and Mr. Yates was scarcely four-and-twenty. The latter was defeated in the struggle; and it is scarcely to be wondered at if he felt exceedingly sore at the reverse with which he was for many years afterwards remorselessly twitted by the envious and the ill-conditioned; but I declare that I never heard him utter one word in disparagement of Thackeray's genius. I never heard him breathe a syllable of doubt as to the rectitude and the general kind-heartedness of the character of his potent and almost solitary enemy. There are few more careful and appreciative students of Thackeray's works than the now slightly elderly gentleman who, when he was a very young man, had the imprudence to gossip about Mr. Thackeray's personal appearance and his manner of shaking hands; while with every noteworthy event in Thackeray's career I believe Mr. Yates to be curiously familiar. He has had, however, I apprehend, quite enough to do with writing his own Life, without troubling himself to construct the biographies of other people; still, it is as well that those who are to come after us should be told that the man of letters so

cruelly punished for so venial an offence heartily admired his foe, intensely appreciated his writings, and ungrudgingly recognised the many admirable points in his character.

The task which I have set myself to perform is a very simple one. All I have to do in these pages is to tell my readers precisely how much I knew of Thackeray, and what I honestly thought, and think about him now. This chapter will probably contain not a few blunders, and perhaps it may be marred by questionable taste or by imperfect apprehension of certain circumstances of which I have treated; but, at all events, my utterances will be honest and straightforward. A great many years ago—say some time in the 'forties—I was a raw lad, employed in the painting-room of the old Princess's Theatre. I was not an articled pupil of the late Mr. William Roxby Beverly, the accomplished artist who at the period of which I speak was chief scene-painter at the Princess's; but he showed me the very greatest kindness, and did his best to foster my progress in an art in which I was not destined to excel. I never rose beyond the grade of an assistant

scene-painter; and, indeed, I scarcely think that my capacity for working in distemper went beyond drawing-in architectural details to scale, or ruling up the lines in the panelling of old-fashioned rooms and the façades of antique temples. I could draw a Corinthian column—shaft, capital, and pedestal—well enough; but to paint it effectively was beyond my power. The manager of the theatre, however, Mr. John Medex Maddox, knew well enough that I was a handy lad, with a taste for hard work; so he made use of me, when I was not wanted in the painting-room, in all kinds of minor ways about the theatre: from painting and gilding the properties, modelling pantomime masks, translating pieces from the French, copying parts, and writing out the advertisements; to occasionally helping with the accounts in the Treasury, "holding the book" in the prompt box, or "taking stock" in the wardrobe. In fact, I may say that I have done almost everything in a theatre save act. For the histrionic profession I never had the slightest inclination. I may venture to add that my varied services were remunerated with a salary of fifteen

shillings a week—a small wage, you may say, but one which I found altogether sufficient for my needs. And not only did I manage to make both ends meet, but it rarely happened that on Treasury day, Saturday, I did not find myself with a surplus of eighteenpence in hand to defray my expenses at Potter's Coffee House, Long Acre. I was usually free at eight p.m.; and I would hasten four or five, and sometimes six, evenings a week from Oxford Street to Long Acre.

My banquets at Potter's were not of a very Apician character. They consisted habitually of a big cup of coffee, a couple of slices of thick bread and butter, and, on high days and holidays, a rasher of bacon. Why, you may ask, did I affect this particular house of entertainment in Long Acre, when there were plenty of coffee-shops in Castle Street and Wardour Street and Oxford Market? I went to Potter's for the reason that the establishment possessed a library of, I should say, at least three thousand volumes, shabbily bound, very much dogs'-eared, and occasionally blurred with grease-spots, as though the volumes had been lying

open close to the fire where the bacon was being fried, and had suffered occasionally from the spluttering abroad of splashes of hot fat. I can see Potter now—a stout elderly party, with close-cropped grey hair, and a closely shaven face not unlike, in expression, that of the late M. Ernest Renan. He always wore a black alpaca jacket and a white apron. It was he who brought you the books for which you asked; and he always scanned you carefully as you opened the volume. Whether the worthy coffee-house keeper was asking himself if you were indeed an earnest student of instructive literature, or whether he was revolving in his mind the possibilities of your running away with one of his books, I do not know; but, take him for all in all, Potter was, to me, practically an inscrutable individual. He may have been a ripe scholar who had taken to coffee-shop-keeping after bitter disappointments in the precarious career of authorship, or he may have been wholly innocent of culture. At all events, happy night after happy night did I devour the contents of the dogs'-eared tomes in his library; and much more greedily did I enjoy them

than I did his bacon, which was slightly too "streaky."

Among the literary stores of this coffee-house there was a complete set of *Fraser's Magazine* from the beginning; and it was in the pages of the once-renowned "Regina" that I first read Carlyle's "Diamond Necklace," Maginn's savage attack on Grantley Berkeley's novel, and Father Prout's wonderful translation of "Judy Callaghan" into Latin verse. As I travelled through these, to me, enchanting volumes, I became aware of a writer whose name, so I opined, should have been Proteus, since he was continually assuming fresh incarnations. The son of Oceanus and Tethys, as most of us know, used to elude the grasp of his inquirers by taking the form of a tiger or a lion, or disappearing in a flame of fire, a whirlwind, or a rushing stream. The Protean writer in *Fraser* used to baffle me by donning such aliases as "James Yellowplush," "George Savage Fitzboodle," "Ikey Solomons, Junior," "Major Goliath Gahagan," and at length "Michael Angelo Titmarsh." Still, that these pseudonyms all belonged to one and the same person I never doubted. The hand which had

written "Catherine, a Story"—a work which, to my mind, is only equalled in its scathing irony by Fielding's "Jonathan Wild the Great"—was assuredly that which had penned the "Luck of Barry Lyndon," "Men's Wives," "Memorials of Gormandising," "The Great Hoggarty Diamond," "Men and Coats," "The Ravenswing," and "The Yellowplush Papers."

But who this literary chameleon was—what manner of man this evidently proficient scholar in ancient and modern tongues, this cultured art-critic, traveller, essayist, story-teller, man of the world, and dazzlingly bright satirist and humorist could be—wholly baffled my comprehension. I asked a dear elder brother of mine, long since dead, to tell me something about the writer with many aliases in *Fraser's Magazine*. "You foolish fellow!" he replied; "you ought to have known long ago that his name is William Makepeace Thackeray. I happen to be invited to meet him at dinner next Sunday at a club called The Deanery, in Dean Street, Soho; and I daresay if I speak a word to my host you will be asked too."

The Deanery Club, so called from the

thoroughfare in which it had its *habitat*, was held in the first floor of an unpretending little tavern, of which the landlord was one "Dicky" Morland, who, it was rumoured, was a brother, or at least a relative, of George Morland the painter. Dicky, it was said, was the last man in London who had worn a pigtail; but he had cut off that appendage before I became aware of him. He had still, however, an old-world look about him, inasmuch as he always wore leathers and top-boots. Of the guests at the dinner of which I speak I can only remember, now, Thackeray himself, whose hair was just beginning to grizzle, but was not yet white; Mark Beresford White, a handsome Irish barrister, a connection of the Marquis of Waterford, who is obscurely hinted at in "The Newcomes" as singing "Garryowen na Gloria"; a Cornish squire who, oddly enough, lived at Pendennis Castle; and a Greek gentleman named Papanicolas, who was continually writing fiery letters to the *Times* about the atrocious tyranny and cruelty of British rule in the Ionian Islands.

The years rolled by—four or five of them, I should say—and I had drifted from one calling

into another: failing in most until, early in 1851, just prior to the opening of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, I found myself painting what I thought a highly comic panorama of the celebrities of the epoch on the wall of the grand staircase of Gore House, Kensington, long known as the residence of the Countess of Blessington, which mansion after her death had been taken by the adventurous Alexis Soyer, sometime *chef* at the Reform Club, for conversion into a cosmopolitan restaurant by the name of "Soyer's Symposium." Many thousands of pounds were expended in embellishing the old house and its beautiful grounds, the site, in fact, being that of the present Albert Hall; and when the entire establishment had been duly swept and garnished, we gave, for about a fortnight, a succession of private views of the many fantastically decorated rooms in which All the World and his Wife were to lunch and dine, if they had money enough, during the continuance of the World's Fair, at which, it may be mentioned *en passant*, there was nothing worthy of the name of a refreshment department; no alcoholic liquors being sold in Paxton's House of Glass.

I believe that my friend Mr. Yates is the possessor of the visitors' book of Soyer's Symposium; and a most remarkable collection of autographs must this portly volume contain. I had undertaken to officiate as a kind of master of the ceremonies on the occasions when the nobility and gentry visited the Symposium; and among the great multitude of celebrated people who came to see us, I specially remember the Marquis and Marchioness of Normanby; the Russian Ambassador, Baron Brunnow; Benjamin Lumley, lessee of Her Majesty's Theatre; Sir George Wombwell, father of the present popular baronet; Dr. Walker, to whose untiring efforts the nation owes the abolition of intramural interments; Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, M.P., and Mr. William Makepeace Thackeray.

It was on a Sunday morning that the novelist made his appearance, accompanied by Richard Doyle, of *Punch*, at Gore House. At the time when I had first seen Mr. Thackeray he was well known in literary, and, I daresay, in fashionable circles; but by the public at large he was altogether ignored. A wonderful change in the course of a very few years had taken place in his

status. He had become famous as the author of "Vanity Fair," and he had begun "Pendennis." His hair by this time was nearly white, and yet he was barely forty. I had just been publishing through the house of Ackermann, in the Strand, a book of etchings, professedly humorous, called "The Great Exhibition Wot is to Be;" and when I reminded Thackeray that I had met him when I was quite a lad, he smilingly recalled the occasion, spoke with approval of the book of etchings which he had just seen, and asked me, incidentally, if I was "Luke Limner." I informed him in reply that I had not the advantage to be the bearer of the pseudonym in question, and that the very clever draughtsman known as "Luke Limner" was a Mr. John Leighton. Then I conducted Thackeray and "Dicky" Doyle over all the most notable apartments in the Symposium; and so, proceeding into the grounds, we met Soyer, for whom Thackeray had the friendliest of feelings and genuine admiration to boot; since the mercurial Frenchman was something more than an excellent cook—that is to say, Alexis was a man of sound common sense, a practical

organiser, a racy humorist and a constant sayer of good things. Thackeray, as an old member of the Reform Club, Soyer almost worshipped; and his affection for him was enhanced by the circumstance that the novelist spoke French with exquisite purity and epigrammatic felicity. He was not, perhaps, quite so accurate a French scholar as the late Alfred Wigan; still, he could hold his own, and hold it firmly, with any of the best French-speaking Englishmen of his epoch.

I remember Soyer showing him a great tent in which half-crown dinners were to be served. "Zis," quoth the *chef*, "is ze Baronial Hall." "I should rather have thought," replied Thackeray, "that it was a *marquee*." There was not much in the joke, perhaps; but of course we all laughed, and something much droller was to be said that Sunday forenoon. There was present among our visitors a certain notable quack of the period, who, by dint of sedulously advertising his nostrums, was piling up a princely fortune. I had been on amicable terms with "Professor" —— for some time, having been myself, between 1848 and 1850, the proprietor of several short-lived periodicals for

which advertisements were as the breath of life; and when the advertisements—every one of which, by the way, paid at that time a duty of eighteenpence to the Government—fell off, the periodicals died. Now, the "Professor" at Gore House whispered to me, "Isn't that Mr. Thackeray, the great writer?" I replied in the affirmative. "Will you kindly introduce me to him?" added the patent medicine-vendor. The request made me slightly nervous. I had heard that there were moments when it was not always safe to approach Mr. Thackeray with anything of the nature of solicitation; that there were seasons when he had, figuratively speaking, the "black dog" on his shoulder, and that inopportune demands would sometimes incite the sable quadruped to bark and snap viciously. Nevertheless I remembered that, as a Master of the Ceremonies, I was bound to introduce everybody to everybody else; so I turned to the novelist and said in an undertone to him, "Mr. Thackeray, here is 'Professor' ——, whom we have all heard of, and who is anxious to be presented to you." "Bring him along," replied the novelist. Evidently there was no black dog on his shoulder

that Sunday morning; so I introduced the "Professor," with whom Thackeray very graciously shook hands, making him at the same time a very low bow, and, to my horror, saying gravely, "I hope, sir, that you will live longer than your patients."

There was a rush of fresh visitors just then, and I found it convenient to withdraw; but about an hour afterwards, standing at the entrance gate, close to the coach-house which had been used in the Blessington era by Count Alfred D'Orsay as a sculptor's studio, I met my friend the "Professor" again. "Good-bye, sir," he said, shaking my hand warmly, "good-bye, sir. I am very much obliged to you for your kindness; and if you ever start another paper, you can reckon upon me for a half-page advertisement in the first number. As for that Mr. Thackeray, sir, I suppose that he is a very clever man; *but I think that I could buy him up three times over.*" And so I suppose the "Professor" could easily have done in the year 1851.

Thackeray, at that time, was only beginning to earn large sums by his writings; but he was no longer in those genteelly straitened circumstances

which, with such inimitable humour, he alluded to in "The Carmen Lilliense," in which he tells how "Titmarsh was in pawn at Lille," and how he was rescued from the duresse of a suspicious landlord by "a ten-pound note from grandmamma." But it was not until he visited the United States on a lecturing tour that he became really affluent. I remember, at a New England Society dinner once, held at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, New York, sitting next to a most amiable and popular American divine, the Rev. Dr. Bellows, who had been one of Thackeray's most intimate friends during his stay in America, and had even, if I remember aright, given him the use of his church as a lecture-room. He described to me the almost boyish delight with which Thackeray told him on his return from New Orleans of the great financial success with which he had met in the States. "Parson," these were his words repeated to me by Dr. Bellows, "it's come at last. I have made a pot of money." And if ever a man deserved to win a crock of gold, William Makepeace Thackeray was the man in question.

A few years passed before I met him again.

I was occupied between 1851 and 1856 in writing for *Household Words*, to which I usually contributed an article once a week; and I did scarcely anything else, having altogether abandoned art as a career. I roamed from London into Lancashire, where I abode for many months, now at Liverpool, now at Lancaster, now at Preston, picking up all kinds of fragmentary knowledge of north-country manners and speech. Then I wandered into Ireland, and stayed a considerable time in Dublin; but my most frequent place of flitting to was Paris; and I suppose that in the course of half a dozen years I made at least fifteen journeys to France and back. It was obviously a loose, indolent, good-for-nothing, Bohemian kind of life, but it suited me very well. Now that I am old, and that I can work eight hours a day, six days in every week, I ought perhaps to feel ashamed that forty years ago I thought six hours' labour in the course of six days quite a sufficient pabulum of exertion; still I imagine that I must have been picking up knowledge of some sort or another when I ruefully thought that I was wasting my time. It may be that we are all destined, in the course

of our lives, to enjoy one period at least of the *dolce far niente*. Some people have their lotus-eating season early; others have it late in life. I was one of the most laboriously industrious of boys. I began to fag hard before I came to middle age, and I am fagging now, and cheerfully fagging, in the winter of my days. My *dolce stagione* came to me between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-eight, and thoroughly did I appreciate those balmy years of doing, comparatively speaking, nothing.

One night in the 'fifties—I cannot remember the exact year, but it was shortly after I had written in *Household Words* a paper entitled "The Conversion of Colonel Quagg"—I met, at Rule's Oyster Supper Rooms in Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, Albert Smith, whom I had known since 1847, when I was working as a comic artist for a little monthly periodical, edited by Albert Smith and Angus B. Reach, called *The Man in the Moon*. Albert proposed that we should finish the evening at a club of his called the Fielding, in Maiden Lane itself, nearly opposite Rule's, and close to a long disestablished "sing-song" saloon known as the

Cider Cellars. As it chanced, I was a member at the time of another Maiden Lane club, held at the Bedford Head, and called the Reunion; but, socially considered, the Reunion and the Fielding were as at opposite poles asunder. The members of the Reunion were mainly prosperous business men, with a liking for art or for letters; and juvenile, middle-aged, and elderly literary and artistic and dramatic Bohemians; for Prague in those days had its patriarchs; whereas an old Bohemian at this fastidious *fin-de-siècle* period is as rare as a corncrake in winter. My very old and valued friend, Jonas Levy, barrister-at-law, and these many years past deputy-chairman of the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway; Robert and William Brough, Stirling Coyne, John Hollingshead, Ernest Hart, Frederick Guest Tomlins, John Deffett Francis, the painter; Sam Emery, the comedian; Leicester Buckingham, were a few of the Reunionists whom I can recall to mind; and they were certainly not clubmen of the Fielding kind; although we had one member, Morgan John O'Connell, the nephew of the illustrious Daniel, who belonged both to upper and middle-class Czechland.

To tell the truth, I was rather frightened when I found myself with Albert Smith in the rooms of the Fielding Club—the members seemed to me, as they probably were, so immeasurably my superiors in intellect and in social rank—but I was reassured when I beheld the now blanched head and the gleaming gold-rimmed spectacles and felt the pressure of the kind hand of Thackeray. We soon left the revellers in the larger room and adjourned to an adjacent apartment; and there Thackeray talked for a full hour, criticising in his own happy manner the capacity of those literary youngsters of the period whom he thought to be "coming on," and among whom he distinguished pre-eminently James Hannay, essayist, reviewer, satirist, and novelist, who, at the master's death, published a delightful "Brief Memoir of Thackeray," in a journal which he once edited—the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*—and who died, too soon for friendship but not for celebrity, British Consul at Barcelona.

I have not forgotten, I hope, one word of the wise and gentle counsel which Thackeray

gave me that night, and how he bade me "buckle my belt tight," "hang out my sign," and ask him to come and take a chop with me. Some of his forecasts of what I might do if I tried proved to be almost of the nature of prophecy; and if I may borrow an image from one of the crafts which I practised in my youth, I may say that my heart and mind were to me as he talked even of the nature of a plate of copper, and that, with the acutest of needles and the subtlest aquafortis, he etched and bit in on that plate a rule of work and study and conduct from which I have been enabled these many years past very rarely to deviate.

In the lives of most men there occurs at least one period when they are stirred by some kind of ambition—that is to say, by a more or less eager desire to gain preferment, honour, superiority, or fame. If my remembrance serves me correctly, I was really agitated about 1855 by the ambition to write a Book. I thought that I would undertake a Life of William Hogarth, of whose works I had been ever since my boyhood a passionately devoted student; and then it struck me that I could

not do better than seek counsel about the proposed biography from Thackeray, whose artistic appreciation of Hogarth had been splendidly shown in his Lectures on the English humorists; although I must confess that Thackeray in his notice of Hogarth seems inclined to treat the great painter, satirist, and moralist in a manner slightly *du haut en bas*. He acknowledged his genius and the rectitude of his character; still, to William Makepeace Thackeray, son of an Anglo-Indian official, Charterhouse schoolboy and University undergraduate, member of the Athenæum, the Reform, the Garrick, and other superior clubs, Hogarth was only a clever, jovial, hard-headed Cockney tradesman who, although he came at last to be Serjeant Painter to the King, to keep his coach, and to have a little country house at Chiswick and a town house in Leicester Fields, was unable wholly to obliterate that social past in which he had been apprenticed to Mr. Gamble, the silver-plate engraver in Cranbourne Alley, and in which he had toiled as a caricaturist and an illustrator of books for the printsellers and the publishers.

One forenoon I called upon Thackeray at his house in Onslow Square, Brompton; and he gave me, as usual, the heartiest of receptions. He was delighted with the idea of a biography of Hogarth; and sagaciously added that the first thing to do in the matter was to secure a first-rate publisher for the work. So he sat down and wrote a letter introducing me in terms far more eulogistic than I deserved to Mr. George Smith, of the firm of Smith and Elder, whose place of business was then on the Hill of Corn itself. It was a fine day, and Thackeray and I walked from Brompton to Piccadilly; gossiping the whole time on a hundred and one topics, literary and artistic, foreign and domestic.

I need scarcely say that when he was not in a tetchy temper, caused by extreme physical anguish, Thackeray was one of the most delightful conversationalists it was possible to imagine. There were very few subjects indeed on which he could not talk, and talk admirably. He was as fluent in the French and in the German as in the English language. He had, I should say, a fair knowledge of Italian. He was never tired of discoursing about books

and bookmen, about pictures and painters, about etchers and engravers and lithographers; and, moreover, he was a born wit and a brilliant epigrammatist. So we walked and talked by bustling Knightsbridge into crowded Piccadilly; and halting just opposite Morell's, the well-known Italian warehouse, Thackeray observed that he was about to order some wine. He made me a bow which, in its sweeping stateliness, would have done honour to Sir Charles Grandison: concurrently giving me his hand, which was cold enough to have belonged to a professor of swimming who had just emerged from his tank; and then he stalked over the way; leaving in my mind a perplexed impression that he had suddenly forgotten who I was, or, that knowing me, he had arrived at the conclusion that I was a confounded bore, and that the sooner he got rid of me the better it would be. When I came to know him intimately I fully understood the reason for these sudden reactions of apparent *hauteur* and "stand-offishness." It was only his way. He could not help that which probably was due either to an acute spasm of bodily pain or the sudden

passing of a black cloud across the mind of one who, although he could be upon occasion full of fun and frolic, was not, I should say, on the whole, altogether a happy man.

I sped the next day to Cornhill; saw Mr. George Smith, and presented Thackeray's letter of introduction. The eminent publisher received me very amicably; and at once, and favourably, he entertained the idea of a Life of Hogarth: promising ere long to come to a definite business understanding with me in the matter. Then we began to talk about Thackeray himself, whose novel of "Esmond" had just been published by his firm, and with which Mr. George Smith was enraptured. Forthwith I repaired to the reading-room of the British Museum, and began to hunt up facts and dates concerning the painter of the "Rake's Progress" and the "Marriage à la Mode." But it was not to be. Fate said no; and my *Life* of Hogarth is yet unwritten.

While in the very midst of the roaring of the looms of daily journalism in 1860, and living in Brompton Row, S.W., I received one morning a note from Thackeray containing

the brief announcement—"About to start new magazine. First-rate bill of fare. Want rich collops from you. Come and see me.—W. M. T. P.S.—Don't forget Hogarth." I lost no time in calling on Thackeray—then living in Onslow Square, I think—and he explained to me fully the scope and purport of the new monthly periodical which he was to edit, and which was to be published by Messrs. Smith and Elder. He showed me the marvellously clever design (drawn by a Mr. Sikes, if I am not mistaken) for the cover of this new venture, which was to be called the *Cornhill Magazine*. He at once suggested Hogarth as a text on which I was to write a series of papers. We agreed that a serious biography would be somewhat too weighty an adventure in a magazine; so it was arranged that my monthly articles were to have the title of "William Hogarth, Painter, Engraver, and Philosopher: Essays on the Man, the Work, and the Time." I shall always regard the ten or eleven months during which my connection with the *Cornhill* existed as one of the happiest periods in my life. The Hogarth essays, all

shallow and inconclusive as they were, had some kind of success, and brought me into communication with many new and afterwards deeply valued friends, who, quite unsolicited, wrote to me letters full of sympathy, and—as was quite justifiable, seeing that I was little more than thirty years of age—full of friendly advice. Among these friends I am glad to be able to remember Charles Kingsley, Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne, and John Forster.

Mr. George Smith was a very munificent publisher. In fact, they used to say that he sent Albert Smith so handsome a cheque for an article of such brevity that Albert, who was one of the simplest and plainest speaking of mankind, warned the too-bounteous bookseller that if he continued disseminating cheques of this kind he would come to poverty. I received for my essays on William Hogarth a larger monthly payment than I had hitherto obtained from any publisher; and, moreover, the text being supplemented by a considerable quantity of notes in smaller type, Mr. Smith insisted on paying for the notes a larger sum than that agreed upon for the text. He was, moreover, a

festive bibliopole; and once a month the contributors to and the artists of the *Cornhill* were bidden to a sumptuous banquet, held at a house in Hyde Park Square. I well remember the first *Cornhill* dinner. Thackeray, of course, was in the chair; and on his left hand I think there sat a then well-known baronet, Sir Charles Taylor. On the president's right was good old Field-Marshal Sir John Burgoyne. Then we had Richard Monckton Milnes, soon to be Lord Houghton; Frederick Leighton and John Everett Millais, both young, handsome men, already celebrated and promising to be speedily famous. I think George H. Lewes was there; but I am sure that Robert Browning was. Anthony Trollope was very much to the fore, contradicting everybody; afterwards saying kind things to everybody, and occasionally going to sleep on sofas or chairs; or leaning against sideboards, and even somnolent while standing erect on the hearthrug. I never knew a man who could take so many spells of "forty winks" at unexpected moments, and then turn up quite wakeful, alert, and pugnacious, as the author of "Barchester Towers," who had nothing of the

bear but his skin, but whose ursine envelope was assuredly of the most grisly texture. Sir Edwin Landseer; Sikes, the designer of the *Cornhill* cover; Frederick Walker—the last a very young man with every line in his features glowing with bright artistic genius; and Matthew Higgins, the "Jacob Omnium" of the *Times*, who was taller even than his fast friend Thackeray, were also among the guests at this memorable birthday banquet.

Naturally, Thackeray had to deliver a congratulatory speech after the cloth was drawn. Not for the first time, perhaps, do I hint that the great author of "Vanity Fair" was not a good after-dinner speaker. He read with perfect grace and purity of intonation; and I remember being one of a densely crowded audience who had gathered to listen to the first of Thackeray's lectures on the "Four Georges" in the huge building erected on the site of the old Surrey Zoological Gardens. I am partially deaf, and I was a considerable distance from the platform; still I could hear every word that the lecturer uttered; and I was raised to enthusiasm not only by the interesting nature

of his matter, but also by the perfection of his elocutionary manner. As a post-prandial speaker, however, Thackeray was undeniably the reverse of felicitous. I knew this; and as I cherished for the man a sentiment not only of literary cult, but of love and veneration for him personally, I rejoiced that I now knew him well enough to ask him before the dinner took place whether he was quite easy in his mind about *the* speech. So I went to him while he was at breakfast in Onslow Square, on the morning of the banquet, and asked him if the speech was "all right." "As right as rain," he replied. "I dictated it last evening to my secretary; I have learned it by heart, and I have just repeated it to my daughters." I felt partially relieved; but I purposely arrived at Hyde Park Square in the evening ten minutes before the time appointed for the dinner, and waited for Thackeray. When he arrived I just whispered to him, "Speech all right?" "As right as ninepence," he made answer, laughing. "I have repeated it twice in the brougham, and it will go trippingly." Alas! When the master arose to make the one oration of the evening, he began

capitally. "Gentlemen," he said, "we have captured eighty thousand prisoners." This was a neat and happy allusion to the circulation of the first number of the *Cornhill;* and a murmur of approval ran through the distinguished assemblage. Had it only ended in a murmur! But some occult fiend suggested to Sir Charles Taylor that he should cry, in a sonorous voice, "Hear, hear!" and the esteemed baronet had a slight peculiarity in intonation which made him pronounce "Hear, hear!" as "Hyah, hyah!" Then somebody laughed. Then Thackeray, thoroughly upset, lost his temper, and exclaiming, "Upon my word, Sir Charles Taylor, if you say another word I will sit down," proceeded to stumble through a few limping and disjointed sentences, and then resumed his seat; evidently annoyed to the stage of exasperation, although warmly sympathised with by the whole company.

The "Hogarth Papers" having run their course, and having made some slight public stir, it occurred to an astute publisher in Fleet Street, Mr. John Maxwell, that, with considerable prospect of success, I might conduct a monthly

magazine to which my own name should be attached. I agreed with the suggestion, and the title which I proposed was *Temple Bar*. The feelings of friendship with which I was honoured by Thackeray were not diminished one iota by my literary separation from him; and soon afterwards he very cheerfully acquiesced in my request that, in conjunction with Charles Mackay, the author of "A Good Time Coming," and to whose rare abilities as a poet and prose writer not half enough justice has yet been done, he should be my sponsor as a candidate for membership of the Reform Club, Pall Mall. "I daresay," he added with a sly twinkling of his spectacles, "that you will be pilled. I was pilled myself at the Travellers'; and the man who gave me the casting black ball, frankly avowed that he had done so, saying that 'they did not want any writing fellows there.'

"There are," he continued, "a whole bushel of reasons, most of them unlooked-for, why a man gets 'pilled' at a London club. Fortunately your name is not Smith, as, if it were, all the Smiths in the club would combine against you, through fear that their letters might be mis-

delivered to you. On the other hand, you would probably get two or three black balls because your name is Sala and not Smith. Some people would say that you are a fiddler, or that your father was a hairdresser or a cook, or something foreign and sociably ineligible. The cruellest case of 'pilling,'" concluded Thackeray, "within my knowledge was that of a man whom I had put up myself, and for whom I had found a most influential seconder; but on the afternoon of the ballot I was still canvassing for votes, and I found asleep on a sofa in the smoking-room a very old friend whom I ventured to wake up, saying, 'Come along, old fellow, and vote for Jenkins.' He looked at me with an expression of countenance just a little more ferocious than you would suppose a she-bear to have who had just been robbed of her cubs; then he rose, shook himself, and grunted, 'Oh yes; certainly. I'll come and vote for your friend.' I need scarcely say that Jenkins was black-balled; and, on the whole, perhaps it is better to let sleeping dogs lie." I was lucky enough to be elected some time in 1862.

During the last year of a friendship the

recollection of which, full as it was of affection on both sides and of deep respect as well, on mine, I shall treasure to my dying day, I saw Thackeray at least three times a week, either at the Reform or at his own hospitable house. He had moved from Onslow Square to a tall red-brick edifice which he had purchased close to Kensington Palace, which house he bought in a somewhat dilapidated condition, but which, with a large expenditure of money, he transformed into a stately mansion. I remember in particular one dinner at which the chief guest was Mr. Charles Sumner, the renowned American statesman and orator, who had been extremely kind to Thackeray during the visit of the novelist to the United States. Mr. Sumner was afterwards to be my friend in America; and late in 1863 he presented me to Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States. Senator Sumner was a very handsome, stately, academic-looking man, with a deep voice and a distinct enunciation very much resembling that of Macready the actor; and, in fact, it always struck me that Mr. Sumner was given to posing or attitudinising in a slightly histrionic manner. There was a

little passage of arms between him and Thackeray at the dinner of which I speak, owing to Mr. Sumner's insistence that Thackeray was bound to write a book recording his experiences of Transatlantic travel and his opinions of the American people. The only answer of the novelist to these arguments was, "Dickens wrote a book about America, and your people didn't like it." Mr. Sumner, however, was not satisfied, and continued his protestations that the American people wanted an American book from Thackeray, and that they had had nothing except the "Virginians," which they rather resented, inasmuch as it contained a portrait of George Washington which they thought was somewhat lacking in reverence to the Father of his Country.

Very diplomatically Thackeray changed the subject by calling for critical opinions on three different kinds of cognac, decanters of which were served with the coffee. One sample, he declared, came from the cellars of the Tuileries, and was laid down by the butler of Napoleon I. This gave him the opportunity of launching into a fierce tirade against Napoleon the Great, and

of relating a story that, in his childhood, being brought from Calcutta to England, the ship touched at St. Helena, and he was conducted to Longwood, where through a gap in a hedge he caught sight of the exile himself. Mr. Sumner was rather Bonapartist in his views; and in the discussion which followed, the question as to whether Thackeray should have written an account of his American experiences fell happily into abeyance.

The last time I saw Thackeray in the flesh was in August, 1863; and the occasion was a whitebait dinner at the Ship, Greenwich. Ladies as well as gentlemen were present at the gathering, and among the latter I especially remember William Howard Russell and Robert Chambers. Thackeray was in his brightest mood, as full of fun as a boy. He had learned from the manager that, in a room directly under the one in which we were dining, Mr. Douglas Cook, then editor of the *Saturday Review*—a journal in which at that period, about twice in every month, I was abused as though I had been a pickpocket—was entertaining Mr. Beresford Hope and other personages of light and leading. Thackeray

jocularly proposed that I should be tied up in a table-cloth, and by means of a rope formed of twisted napkins be lowered to the bow window of the apartment where Mr. Cook and his friends were revelling, in order that I might fulfil the part of skeleton at a Greenwich-Egyptian feast.

Towards evening—and a most delicious evening it was—just one touch of melancholy overshadowed the general gaiety. Quite incidentally Thackeray said, "I have made my mark, and my money, and said my say; and the world smiles on me; and perhaps were I to die to-morrow the *Times* newspaper would give me just three-quarters of a column of obituary notice." I was far from England when Thackeray died, and never saw the *Times* notice of his demise. Was it a little over or a little under a column in length? There was no Atlantic cable in 1863, and the first week of January, 1864, had passed away when, being in New York, I learned to my inexpressible grief that William Makepeace Thackeray was no more. You will understand that, although long intervals occurred in our intercourse between

the period of my boyhood and the autumn of 1863, I had many opportunities of personally studying the man, and of mentally hoarding up all that I saw and all that I thought concerning him. He was most emphatically a good man, but one continually struggling with an uneven and sometimes objectionable temperament. He was unswervingly and invariably truthful; he was kind, compassionate, charitable, and, to the best of my belief, strongly imbued with religious principle and sentiment. *L'indole era cattiva.* For women he had the chivalrous respect and devotion of his own Colonel Newcome.

Of his occasional propensity to treat people in a distant, stand-off, and "Great Twamley" manner I have already incidentally and laughingly spoken. I knew him long enough and intimately enough to regard these little exhibitions of "peskiness" as utterly unworthy of serious notice. When I strolled into the hall of the Reform, either at luncheon-time or in the evening, and saw Mr. Thackeray, I never failed to take careful note of him. If, to my thinking, he was in a cantankerous humour—the expression is his own—I gave him the

widest of wide berths. But when he espied me, and I saw him put his hands in his pockets and beam over his spectacles, I knew that he was in good "form," and that he would be cheerful, tolerant, and delightful. He had an odd way of calling me the "Reverend Doctor Sala," chiefly because, I believe, I used to talk to him quite as outspokenly and seriously as in the old time he had talked to me. I never flattered nor fawned upon him, and I never took liberties with him. He knew how much I loved and revered him, and that is why we got on so well together. There were some friends of his who used to call him "Thack," and slap him on the back. I never called him anything but "Mr. Thackeray;" and I did so because I knew he was my elder, and because I conscientiously believed that he was in every way my better.

From the bottom of my heart I contend that he was not a cynic; I mean that he entertained no morose nor contemptuous views and tenets touching human nature. The real cynic has the qualities of the surly dog; he snarls, he is captious, he is surly, currish, ill-conditioned. Bishop

Berkeley speaks of "cynical content in dirt and beggary." Thackeray, on the contrary, loved light and culture and luxury. I have heard him say that he liked to go to his bedchamber at night with a wax taper and a silver candlestick. That was merely a frank way of saying that he preferred the elegances of life to squalor and ugliness. He has been unjustly termed a cynic, because he could not help being a satirist; but although he was a master of irony, and on occasions could use the scalpel with effect as terrible as ever it had been used by Juvenal, by Dryden, or by Pope, I never heard him say one unkindly thing of human weakness, or frailty, or misfortune. Like Fontenelle, he might have averred on his death-bed that he had never uttered the slightest word against the smallest virtue.

There have not been wanting critics of his character who have insinuated that Thackeray's own individuality might have found a niche in that great Walhalla of pomposities and prigs and "mean cusses," the "Book of Snobs." He was not a snob. He was a high-minded and chivalrous gentleman; but

circumstances and his own peculiar temperament occasionally prompted him to say and do things which ill-natured people might have considered to be snobbish. For example, he came over to me terribly disturbed one morning at Brompton; and told me that although the London season was just drawing to a close, he had not been once asked to a dinner or a reception "at the Jersey's," meaning that famous leader of society, the late Countess of Jersey. I said, very quietly, "So much the worse for the Jersey." Whereupon he put his hands in his pockets and began to talk quite sociably about things in general. The truth must out—he was of gentle extraction; had been academically educated; had inherited a modest patrimony; was intimate with the best Anglo-Indian society, county families, judges, military officers of high rank, and so forth; and even when he was poor and thought himself a Bohemian he was in reality a "swell," although a swell in difficulties.

He liked the best society, and had always mingled with it; and if, like Tommy Moore, he "dearly loved a lord," his partiality for

patrician acquaintances never rendered him deaf to the claims of misfortune, nor regardless of the ties of friendship. His associates, for example, on the *Punch* staff—Jerrold, Mark Lemon, A'Beckett, Horace Mayhew, Tenniel, Leech, and Doyle, were all essentially middle-class men, who very rarely gained, even if they sought, admission to those social circles in which Thackeray had been a welcome guest from his youth upwards. I suppose that I am not altogether myself destitute of pride. My engendrure is not of the gutter; and the parish was not at the cost of my schooling; but I frankly admit that although when I last met Thackeray I had ceased to be an obscure man, I always regarded him as much my superior in social status as he was in literary rank. Perhaps I myself was something of a snob thirty years ago, and am one, still.

CHAPTER II.

CHARLES DICKENS AS I KNEW HIM.

The Growth of Legends—The First Sight of "Boz"—*The Village Coquettes*—Behind the Scenes—Taking the World by Storm—*Oliver Twist* at the St. James's and the Adelphi—The Author's "Eye and a Quarter"—An Interview with George Cruikshank—Dress Then and Now—Mark Lemon and His Smiles—A Night in the Streets and What Came of it—The Turning-point in the Author's Career—Contributions to *Household Words*—Dickens and Thackeray as Conversationalists—Dickens as an Editor—The Disadvantages of Anonymity—"Noctes Ambrosianæ"—*Household Words* Dinners—Douglas Jerrold—Mark Lemon Again—The "Poet" Bunn and his Retort upon *Punch*—Charles Knight and Leigh Hunt—Richard Henry Horne and Robert Bell—William Blanchard Jerrold—Sidney Blanchard—James Payn—Inspector Field—A *Sederunt* of Policemen—A Life of Idling and Flitting—The Stirrings of Ambition—"A Journey Due North."

"ALL things," writes Rabelais, "move towards their end;" and it may be as cogently said that all famous men and women, in whatever grade of life they have achieved renown, become, sooner or later, the heroes or heroines of myths. There is a mythical Napoleon, and a mythical Mary Queen of Scots. Most assuredly are there a mythical Byron and a mythical Keats. Nay; although Thackeray has been dead only thirty years, a cairn of myths

has begun to gather around his individuality; the drollest of these fables being, perhaps, a statement which I recently read in an American paper to the effect that the authorship of the "Vestiges of Creation" had been ascribed, with some show of probability, to the writer of "Vanity Fair"! As well, I should say, might the author of "Hudibras" be credited with the composition of the "Whole Duty of Man."

Charles Dickens has been dead barely twenty-four years; yet the myths are steadily accumulating on his life-story as thickly as dust on a statue in an unswept studio. Not only in the United States and on the Continent, but in his own country, the wildest tales have obtained currency touching the youth, the maturity, and the evening of the life of the illustrious novelist. His habits, his appearance, his manners, his character have been presented from twenty diametrically opposite points of view; and I have met, in the course of reading and of conversation with otherwise well-informed persons, so many descriptions of a perfectly unreal Dickens that I am impelled in this, the decline of my

life, to tell, as distinctly as I can, and with as little superfluous comment as is possible, what I know from actual personal acquaintance and parley with the greatest humourist, the greatest master of pathos, and the greatest creator of middle-class and popular character that the Victorian era has had cause to glory in.

I must tell my readers, in the briefest of preludes, that in the winter of 1836 my mother and her children occupied apartments on the north side of King Street, St. James's; while on the floor above us lived a very talented young gentleman of Welsh extraction—Mr. John Parry, Junior—who was then courting fame as a singer in English opera; but who was destined subsequently to reap much brighter laurels as a skilled harpist, as a superb organist, as a magnificent pianist, and as a highly popular warbler of humorous ditties of the drawing-room entertainment kind. Mr. John Parry, Junior, lived on the second floor in King Street, St. James's, for the selfsame reason that led my mother to fix upon the thoroughfare in question as a place of residence. Our dwelling was directly opposite the Theatre Royal, St. James's; and at that

theatre both she and Mr. John Parry were engaged. Later on, I shall have something to say about the St. James's under the brilliant, but ultimately disastrous, management of John Braham, the famous English tenor, of whom Charles Lamb was apt to say that in his aspect he presented a combination of "the angel, the Jew, and the gentleman;" but at present I intend only to make incidental mention of three or four pieces produced in the first season of Braham's management, which productions were the cause of my first seeing and knowing Charles Dickens. For example, there was brought out at the St. James's an English opera, with a pastoral, or rather bucolic plot, the music of which lyrical work was composed by Mr. John Hullah; while the libretto, or "book," was written by young Mr. Charles Dickens, who had already become, I may say, world-famous as the author of the "Pickwick Papers," but who was much oftener alluded to in conversation and the press as "Boz" than as Dickens. I was present in the front of the house at the first performance of *The Village Coquettes*, which first saw the light, I think,

early in December of the year above-named. Mr. Forster, in his "Life," only devotes a paragraph of fourteen lines to the interest taken by Dickens in Mr. Braham's enterprise at the St. James's Theatre; while of *The Village Coquettes* he simply remarks that "it had a good success, and that it was memorable to him (Mr. Forster) for having brought him first into personal communication with Dickens." I shall thus, I trust, not be accused of plagiarism if I say something in detail of an opera which Mr. Forster probably beheld on the same night that I witnessed it; though he must have seen it with very different eyes and much larger powers of appreciation than I, a small boy of ten, could have. Yet is the entire scene most vividly present in my mind, now; and the latent reason for the distinct remembrance I preserve of the opera may have been that on that night I first set eyes on "Boz."

The personal appearance of Mr. Hullah, who was for many years my dear mother's very good friend, has as completely vanished from the tablets of my memory as the breath from off a mirror or as the foam from off the sea. I can hum most of the melodies in *The Village*

Coquettes now; I can remember the words of most of the songs; I can see John Braham, who personated a wicked squire in a scarlet velvet hunting frock, and John Parry, Junior, in rustic garb and preposterous wig with long ringlets which "wobbled" over his brow, and who sang a song denouncing the wicked squire's threat to turn away from his farm Mr. John Parry's operatic father. After the performance, our nurse-housekeeper—in those simple days nurses often remained in families till their young charges were almost grown up; and these excellent creatures were in a multitude of cases not only domestics but household friends—took me behind the scenes, where I was patted on the head by Braham and chucked under the chin by John Pritt Harley, a comic actor of rare power, who was also stage-manager at the St. James's; and where I found my mother talking to a very young gentleman, with long brown hair falling in silky masses over his temples; with eyes which, young as I was, at once struck me as full of power and strong will, and with a touching expression of sweetness and kindliness on his lips.

There is not the slightest reason why I should give you any more elaborate picture of the countenance or the dress of Charles Dickens. His facial characteristics have been dilated upon —and exhaustively so—over and over again by those who personally knew him; and as for his attire, you have only to look at the engraved portrait, after Daniel Maclise, to see Charles Dickens in his habit as he lived in the month of December, 1836. Let it suffice to say that he dressed up to the very height of the existing fashion. He is not to be blamed, I should say, for having done so. He was feeling his life in every limb, and enjoying its bright side and its good things. After an unhappy childhood, and a laborious and, comparatively speaking, indigent youth, he had suddenly, through his own wonderful genius, wholly unaided and unpatronised by the noble or the wealthy, Turned the Corner, to find himself pacing a highway of roses and with Old Time trudging by his side looking kindly on the youthful traveller, and gently holding the hour-glass, which was, in truth, inevitable, but in which, to "Boz," the sands were as diamond-dust that sparkled as they

passed. Everything smiled upon him. The shout of applause which greeted every monthly issue of the fictions in the green covers was not only audible from his own country, but was wafted to him from across the Atlantic. The very flowers seemed to bloom in his honour, and the birds of the air to sing his praises; nor deem this imagery inflated. Byron awoke one morning to find himself famous; but the trumpet of his fame was sounded chiefly in aristocratic saloons and in the pages of expensive periodicals; while Dickens, with a few masterstrokes, captured and bound to the wheels of his chariot of triumph the entire people of the United Kingdom and of the United States. There had never been in the History of English Letters so complete, so brilliant, so unexpected, and so well-deserved a victory. Think of what there had been Round the Corner, on the other side. The racquet-ground of the Fleet, the coffee-room of the King's Bench; the dingy attorney's office with the grimy windows and the jaundiced-looking blinds, the desks dented by innumerable penknives, the floor splashed with unnumbered ink-stains; the ignoble public-house where

shabby lawyers' clerks congregated in bar-parlours at night to drink and smoke. The pawnbroker's, the cheap eating-house, the chandler's shop; the pits of transpontine theatres, Bartholomew and Greenwich fairs; the cattle and horse market in Old Smithfield; the cheap suburban tea-gardens, the frowsy "well" at the police-courts, and not infrequently the scaffold before the Debtor's-door at Newgate—these were the scenes on the Other Side of the Corner which the industrious young lawyer's clerk and reporter had had to mingle in and to describe.

From a region where all was squalid and obscure, but withal often exceedingly droll and exceedingly pathetic, the young man, of not much more than twenty years, had entered into a realm of softness and radiance. He could not but know that "Pickwick" and "Oliver Twist" were greedily devoured by the highest and noblest in the land; and that the grave editors of the *Quarterly* and the *Edinburgh*, and *Blackwood* and *Fraser*, were cogitating, not without considerable mental perturbation, as to what should be done with this unlooked-for phenomenon —with this astonishing young man who had

reached the summit of superiority in the art of fiction, without knowing or caring to know a single artistic rule or canon thereof. What was to be done with him? Were his merits to be at once and frankly acknowledged or applauded; or was he to be snuffed out? The utmost that critical malevolence could do was to say that he had gone up like a rocket and that he would come down like the stick; but full thirty years elapsed ere that stick exhibited even the slightest symptoms of nearing earth.

Dickens was a constant visitor behind the scenes of the St. James's, both at the wings and in the green-room; and his acquaintance with my mother very soon ripened into friendship. His eldest sister, Fanny, had been a pupil at the Royal Academy of Music, at which institution my own eldest brother, Frederick, was a student before he went to Paris to complete his training as a pianist under the renowned instrumental artist, Kalkbrenner. Throughout his life Dickens was as fond of music and musicians as he was of the drama and of theatrical people. He was, besides, a personal friend of Mr. Harley, already mentioned; and for that admirable comedian, he

wrote in the September preceding the production of *The Village Coquettes* a very funny farce called *The Strange Gentleman*. I have an indistinct idea of having witnessed the performance of a dramatised version of "Oliver Twist" at the St. James's during Braham's management. So far as I can recollect, however, Dickens had nothing to do with the version in question; although, considering the terms of intimacy which existed between Braham, Harley, and himself at the time, it is scarcely probable that his terrible fiction should have been adapted to the stage without some kind of sanction on his part.

Why I have so very feeble a recollection of this particular version of "Oliver Twist" may be accounted for by the circumstance that later on, but while I was still a small boy, I witnessed at the old Adelphi Theatre the performance both of *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*, given on the same night; and there will never be effaced from my mind's eye the image of Frederick Yates as Fagin frying sausages in the thieves' den, a room hung all round with clothes-lines supporting stolen pocket-

handkerchiefs; of Mrs. Keeley, both as Oliver and as Smike; and of that most powerful melodramatic actor, O. Smith, as Bill Sikes. The stronger, more vivid, more exciting dramas at the Adelphi have as completely overlaid my remembrance of *Oliver* at the St. James's, as though my mind were a palimpsest. The under-writing on the vellum is certainly not, however, a classical manuscript, and would scarcely bear to be scraped down to. As a matter of fact, *Oliver Twist*, at the St. James's, was an all but complete failure, and was swiftly withdrawn.

Some seven or eight years elapsed between the coming to an end of the Braham tenancy of the St. James's Theatre and my next meeting Charles Dickens. He had made his first triumphal progress through the United States, and had written "American Notes" and "Martin Chuzzlewit." I had been sent to Paris to be educated in a public school; and when, at the expiration of two years, I returned to my native country, I was consigned to a school at Turnham Green to learn English:—a language which I am still attentively studying, but in which I fear that I have made but scant

progress during the last fifty years or so. Leaving school, it appeared to my parent, my friends, and to some extent to myself, that I ought to follow the profession of an artist. I say "to some extent;" since, although I was passionately fond of drawing, and had had a thorough grounding in practical geometry, in France, I was painfully aware of one fact, which seemed to have been overlooked by the kind mother and kindred who so cordially admired the pen-and-ink drawings, principally caricatures, which I was continually scrawling: the fact in question was that I had been blind in childhood, and that although I recovered my sight under homœopathic treatment, I only got back one completely valid eye. The other was and still remains a "duffer," wandering about on its own account and persistently refusing to do any tangible work:—that is to say, to distinguish anything in the field of vision beyond the light of a very bright lamp or candle, or a large sheet of blank paper; the rest being mainly chaotic fog. If I had been wholly blind of one eye, my prospects as an artist would have been much brighter, since I believe there are a considerable number

of wall-eyed painters and draughtsmen who have done very well with their abilities; but I was so unfortunate as to have an eye and a quarter; and that unwonted addition of twenty-five per cent. to monocular vision simply incapacitated me from drawing anything symmetrically. I was never able to strike a circle with a free hand, or to draw a perpendicular or a horizontal line without the aid of a T-square; nor can I ever succeed in making one side of a bottle, or a vase, or a basin like the other side.

It being, however, necessary when I was about fifteen that I should earn my own living, my mother began sedulously to seek for some employment of an artistic nature that should further that desirable end. An eminent professor of the oboe, the late Mr. Grattan Cooke, gave me a letter of introduction to dear old George Cruikshank, who then lived in Amwell Street, Pentonville, whose friendship thenceforward I enjoyed to the end of his long life. George looked carefully over the huge pile of pen-and-ink drawings which I brought him; advised me to turn my attention to etching and to drawing on wood, and told me to come

to him again when I had made some mastery of those processes. This was encouraging; but it was not an immediate help towards obtaining that livelihood of which I spoke. There happened to have been started some two years previously a wonderfully droll periodical called *Punch*, which was chiefly illustrated by such masters of graphic humour as John Leech and Richard Doyle; and, with pardonable maternal partiality, my parent thought that my rude scratches, promising perhaps, but wholly wanting in practical capacity, might be accepted by the editor of *Punch*. It was fatuity, but pardonable fatuity, for her to think so. She did not know the original editor of *Punch*, Mr. Mark Lemon; but she suddenly bethought herself that that genial gentleman was a friend of Charles Dickens; so she wrote to the novelist, then resident, I think, in Devonshire Terrace, Regent's Park, reminding him of the old St. James's Theatre days, and asking whether she might be allowed to wait upon him with myself and the inevitable portfolio crammed with pen-and-ink drawings.

Now we knew that Dickens was the very

model of a punctual correspondent; and as three whole days had gone by without any answer being received, my mother, as women will do, began to weep and wail and exclaim that Dickens had forgotten his old friend of Braham's theatre. The kind-hearted novelist had not done anything of the kind. He had been taking one of his so frequently enjoyed trips to the seaside; and on the fourth morning we received from Broadstairs, or Brighton, or some other watering-place, an amicable letter making an appointment for us to meet him at ten o'clock on a given morning at the Euston Hotel. Thither we consequently repaired at the appointed time, to find Charles Dickens in appearance not quite the dandy and extremely youthful-looking "Boz" whom I had seen in Braham's green-room on the first night of *The Village Coquettes*. He was in the flower of his manhood; but travel, hard work, and deep thought were just beginning to make their mark upon him, and slightly to thin his brown and silky locks. As regards dress, the exaggerated fashions of the 'thirties had passed away; and the gorgeous raiment which he

had worn when he was the juvenile "Boz" had been replaced by a blue frock-coat and white trousers.

I may just be allowed briefly to remark, that for some reason or another, to me inscrutable—is there a profounder human mystery than fashion?—ladies, as well as gentlemen, from the period of her Majesty's union with the Prince Consort until perhaps the seventh or eighth year of her beneficent reign, dressed with a simplicity which in these days of fifty-guinea gowns, five-guinea bonnets, and four-guinea corsets would be deemed almost Quakerish. A lady in 1842-3 thought that she was sufficiently well dressed—in the morning at least—if she wore a plain frock of printed calico or muslin, a silk scarf, and a plain cottage straw bonnet with a ribbon and no other adornment; while, for afternoon wear, ladies who had passed out of girlhood, but who were not necessarily matronly, delighted in Cashmere, in Lyons or in Paisley shawls, which had the advantage of never wearing out. Ball-dresses, again, were, in the majority of cases, of white muslin, with very scant

adornments save a multiplicity of flounces, and a few flowers.

Dickens received us with his usual cordiality; began to talk about the opera and the play-houses, keeping all the while that wonderful eye of his very earnestly on me: and then we opened the portfolio, and he went quite as earnestly through the pile of drawings. His verdict was that he thought "I should do," that "something must be done," and that Mr. Mark Lemon, the editor of *Punch*, was the man to do it; so the next day we called upon Mr. Lemon at his office in Whitefriars with a letter of introduction from the author of "Pickwick." The genial editor of *Punch* greeted us with effusive, I may say with unctuous kindness and a whole cascade of smiles. I often wondered, when I was the possessor of a tiny white Maltese dog, which his first proprietor triumphantly declared could live very comfortably in a pint pot, that so much bark could come out of such a little body as that dog inhabited. Similarly have I never ceased to marvel at Mark Lemon's capacity for smiling. Niobe,

we all know, was all tears; but Mark Lemon was all smiles. He smiled at my mother; he smiled at me; he smiled at the drawings, and promised to look them over with a view to their favourable consideration; and then he smiled us down a very rickety flight of stairs into Bouverie Street; but I am afraid that when we got into the open, both my mother and myself were in doubt as to whether we should smile, ourselves, or have a good cry. As it was, that dreadful portfolio came back to us in about a week with a polite intimation—he could scarcely smile in pothooks and hangers—from Mr. Mark Lemon that he was unfeignedly sorry for his inability to make use of any of my very promising but, as yet, immature productions. Of my subsequent graphic studies and the grim resolve, after trying half a dozen departments in art, to acquire at least a technical knowledge of some craft which should enable me to earn a living, I may hereafter have occasion to speak; but my business here is with Charles Dickens and what I saw of him.

It must have been early in the 'forties when

that interview at the Euston Hotel took place, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, I never set eyes on Dickens again until the late summer of 1851. Although, as a lad, I had dabbled in literature and had made my first appearance in print in a story in the *Family Herald* in 1845—although I had been the editor and proprietor of a certain short-lived and now wholly forgotten periodical—the ambition or even the hope of doing anything of a noticeable kind, either in literature or in journalism, was for the time dead, or rather dormant, within me. I had made myself able to earn a decent livelihood as an engraver on steel and copper, as a lithographer, and as a draughtsman on wood; but so completely had I lost faith in my ability to write anything that anybody would care to read, that in 1847, when I drew a large number of would-be humorous illustrations for a little comic publication called *The Man in the Moon,* edited by Albert Smith and Angus Reach, I used to ask Albert or Angus to write the line or two of letterpress which explained my caricatures.

It happened that in 1851 I carried on

my business, which was to a large extent a commercial one, as an engraver, in a house in Upper Wellington Street, Strand, of which tenement I had taken the lease. My studio, or rather workshop, was on the ground floor; the first floor I let to a friend who was an advertising agent, and in many of whose advertising ventures I had a share. He lived out of town; I had a bed-room on the second floor; and the rest of the house was unfurnished and unoccupied; because, in the first place, I could not afford to buy any more furniture, and in the second place I did not want lodgers. An old lady in a ragged shawl, and with a bonnet like the sign of the Crown and Cushion without the crown, and who was continually complaining of a malady which she called "spiders at the 'art"—spiders, I should say, requiring large quantities of ardent spirits to quell—came every morning and evening to do my charing; and that was the only attendance that I needed. You will soon perceive the reason why I have troubled you with these apparently insignificant and uninteresting particulars.

One night, late in August, 1851, I think,

having finished my work—I forget exactly at what hour, but the theatres had not closed—I turned off the gas in my workshop, lighted a cigar, and quitted the house; thinking that I would stroll about for half an hour or so and then return to bed. I had no bed at all that night; since it chanced that I had left my watch, my money, save a few pence, and my latch-key on the table in my *atelier;* so I was practically locked out, and had to walk the streets till seven o'clock next morning; when the old lady who suffered from spiders at the heart, and who had a latch-key of her own, came to minister to my needs. I never knew where she lived, or, of course, I should have proceeded to her residence and obtained the key. My partner, the advertising agent, and I had a hearty laugh over my nocturnal misadventure; and he casually threw out the suggestion that I ought to write an account of my "evening out" and send it to some magazine. I shrugged my shoulders. I was utterly unknown and obscure, and, in addition, normally nervous and distrustful of myself. "What editor," I asked, "would accept anything of my writing?" My friend the

advertising agent said, "Why not send the article to *Household Words?*—you have often told me you knew Dickens once upon a time."

Ah! I thought; but it was such a very long time ago. What chance was there for the great Charles Dickens even condescending to cast his eyes on a manuscript penned by a necessitous engraver, three parts of whose time was passed in digging tools of steel into metal plates, laying etching grounds, smoking them and biting the needle work in with aquafortis? Nevertheless, I took heart of grace, using as a desk a big lithographic stone, which had just come in from the most important of my employers, the house of Ackermann, in the Strand. I sat down, and in four hours I managed to write a narrative of my enforced perambulations of the thoroughfares of the metropolis; and to this paper I gave the title of "The Key of the Street." I added to the MS. a letter, in which I reminded the Conductor of *Household Words* that he had known me when I was a boy, and that he had been very kind to me and mine. To whom had he not been kind? The letter was delivered by my friend the advertising agent at the office of

Household Words, which was in Wellington Street itself, but lower down, close to Exeter Change, and where is now the stage-door of the Gaiety Theatre. That house, with the bow-windowed upper storey, was subsequently occupied as the office of the *Naval and Military Gazette*, founded by William Howard Russell. I have not seen the place for years; but I read lately that it had been demolished, or so transformed as to be almost unrecognisable by those formerly familiar with it.

Within four hours from the despatch of my manuscript, I received a letter from Charles Dickens, for which I would now willingly give pieces of gold and pieces of silver. He said he had read my "Key of the Street," that he retained it for early publication, and—some of my experiences had been of a nature approaching the horrible—he had made a few alterations in it, so as not to shock young and lady readers. With this letter came a Bank of England note for five pounds—the largest sum I had ever earned by a single article. So you see that it was through a sheer accident;—or was it through beneficent Fate, that I renewed my

acquaintance with Charles Dickens, and that I entered upon a career of journalism which I have pursued without intermission for forty-two years?

"The Key of the Street" was literally the turning point in *my* career; yet, I may add, as a curious proof of my ignorance of any literary faculty which may have been latent within me, that I at first entertained not the slightest hope, or, indeed, had any lively desire, to contribute any more articles to *Household Words;* and when, a few days after the publication of my paper, the assistant editor of that periodical wrote to express Mr. Dickens's wish to have another essay from my pen, I was for a considerable time in grave doubt as to what I should write about. The Conductor, however, of the journal had got it into his head that I should be a frequent and regular writer in his columns; and while I could not but feel highly flattered by the encouragement shown me, it seemed to me that I had but a very small stock of subjects on which to descant; and it was only after much puzzling and perplexity, that at last I settled in my mind

about half a dozen topics which I thought, from personal knowledge and observation, that I could treat intelligibly.

I had, in my quest after subjects, an invaluable assistant in a dear brother, who has been dead more than thirty years. He was a much better scholar than I was, having been Great Erasmus and Deputy Grecian at Christ's Hospital, and had thrown up his prospects of becoming a Grecian and proceeding to the University to take an appointment in the Tithes Commissioners' Office at Somerset House, from which he drifted to the stage, beginning his theatrical career by playing Hamlet at the Theatre Royal, Dover, from which exalted grade he very soon afterwards subsided into performing the Second Gravedigger at the Theatre Royal, Dublin. He was an actor at the Princess's when my connection with *Household Words* began; and, although he knew personally very little of Charles Dickens, he was an intimate friend of the novelist's brothers, Alfred and Frederick. As I say, he knew a great deal more about books than I did; he was a thorough man of the world, a keen observer, and a rare humourist;

only he was not endowed with the faculty of literary composition. Of that faculty being a natural endowment, I am as thoroughly convinced as I am that some people are endowed with the faculty of public speaking, vulgarly but most expressively known as the "gift of the gab." You may learn by painful study how to put your thoughts in print in a coherent and lucid manner, just as by going to a professor of elocution you may master the mechanism of the art of rhetoric and be able to speak well enough to induce a large audience to listen to you with attention; but without the natural aptitude for writing, or for speaking, you will never find that either authorship or oratory will be to you a labour of love.

My brother rendered me yeoman's service by suggesting and getting up themes on which to enlarge in *Household Words*. We used to take long journeys on foot or by cab or omnibus into the remote suburbs of the metropolis; we explored inlying and outlying slums; and it was by the advice of my beloved kinsman that I managed to write such articles as "Down Whitechapel Way," "Jack Alive in London," "Houses to

Let," "City Spectres," "Servants," and so forth. I declare, nevertheless, that it was full four months before I began to "feel my feet" as a tentatively humorous essayist; and, furthermore, I would observe that during the six years of my close affiliation to Mr. Dickens's periodical I scarcely ever wrote an article for any other paper or magazine. About half a dozen, perhaps, would be the aggregate of my extraneous contributions to the periodical press; and one of them I recall to mind was an article on Petticoat Lane on Sunday morning, which was illustrated by the late Keeley Halswelle, then a facile and picturesque draughtsman on wood. Writing for "*H. W.*" seemed to me a pleasant recreation by which I could earn a little money in addition to the remuneration which my work as an engraver brought me; but I had no more thought of trying to be a contributor to any weekly or daily newspaper than of sending an article to the editor of the *Quarterly* or of the *Edinburgh*. There was no question of modesty in the matter; it was simply mental density and the inability to recognise the fact that there was within me some seed which, if duly fertilised, would fructify.

I had written, perhaps, half a dozen papers for "*H. W.*" when I received a note from Dickens saying that he would like to see me on a given forenoon at the office in Wellington Street. Rarely have I been more surprised—I may almost say more amazed—than I was when, in the little editorial sanctum with the bow-window of the house in Wellington Street, I was again presented to Charles Dickens—this time by Mr. William Henry Wills, the assistant editor and general manager of the paper, a gentleman who had long been connected with the editorial department of the publications of the Messrs. Chambers of Edinburgh; who had married Miss Janet Chambers, a member of the great Scottish publishing house; and who, I believe, had made the novelist's acquaintance while he, Mr. Wills, was filling a subordinate post on the *Daily News* during the brief, and not altogether prosperous, editorship of that newspaper by Charles Dickens. I was overcome with astonishment at the sight of the spare, wiry gentleman who, standing on the hearthrug, shook me cordially by the hand—both hands, if I remember aright—and said

kind things about my writings—things which I am proud to remember and too proud to repeat.

But, ah! how changed was the illustrious compeller of smiles and tears. He was then, I should say, barely forty; yet to my eyes he seemed to be rapidly approaching fifty. The silky locks had thinned, and were grizzling; the slight side-whiskers had been replaced by a moustache and spade-shaped short beard. The eyes had lost nothing of their searching sweetness—eyes that have always seemed to follow one about like those of the so-called Beatrice Cenci in Guido's deathless canvas; but the brows and cheeks were deeply lined; and trouble, as well as thought and intensity of literary application, had had, perhaps, something to do with those premature furrows and wrinkles. One reason, perhaps, for my astonishment at the alteration which had taken place in the aspect of my Master in Letters, was that I had last seen him when I was a raw boy, and I was still a raw young man.

In some temperaments and under some physical conditions youth seems, to its fancied possessor, to be prolonged for an immensity,

relatively speaking, of time. Few of us "age" in precisely the same manner. Some of us are old before our time, and others quite youthful when they should be old; and I have the hardihood to say that I felt young at forty, young at forty-five, young at fifty; and that it was not until I was verging on sixty, that, one miserable morning, many thousands of miles from home, I awoke to the knowledge that I was an old man. The conviction came as though it were a stroke of mental paralysis. Although outwardly aged beyond his years, it was nevertheless the selfsame Charles Dickens of 1836 and 1843 with whom I held converse in the little room in Wellington Street in 1851; and touching that converse I may say just thus much. To talk to Dickens was a vastly different thing from talking to Thackeray. The author of "Vanity Fair" was a master of anecdote, *persiflage*, and repartee; he was a varied and fluent linguist; he was a lover and practitioner of art; he was saturated with seventeenth and eighteenth century literature, both French and English; and he could hold his own with such masters of conversation as Abraham

Hayward and Richard Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), and with such a formidable epigrammatist and wit as Douglas Jerrold.

Dickens, on the other hand, seldom talked at length on literature, either of the present or the past. He very rarely said anything about art; and, for what is usually termed "high art," I think that he had that profound contempt which is generally the outcome of lack of learning. Indeed, when I first visited Venice and wrote for him an article called "A Poodle at the Prow"—my text being a gondola on the Grand Canal and the gondolier's dog—he expressed himself as especially pleased with my production on the ground that it contained "no cant about art." What he liked to talk about was the latest new piece at the theatres, the latest exciting trial or police case, the latest social craze or social swindle, and especially the latest murder and the newest thing in ghosts. He delighted in telling short, droll stories, and occasionally indulging in comic similes and drawing waggish parallels. He frequently touched on political subjects—always from that which was then a strong Radical point of view, but which at present I

imagine would be thought more Conservative than Democratic; but his conversation, I am bound to say, once for all, did not rise above the amusing commonplaces of a very shrewd, clever man of the world, with the heartiest of hatred for shams and humbugs. I grew week by week in his favour, because, as he was kind enough to put it, "he could always make something of what I did"; and ere long, I had not unfrequently the honour of finding myself "double-barrelled" in the current number of *Household Words*—that is to say, the first and middle articles would be from my pen.

And this brings me to advert, somewhat querulously, to an accusation frequently levelled at me in my early days, to the effect that I was a servile imitator of Dickens. All of the young men who gathered round him—Blanchard Jerrold, Sydney Blanchard, W. Moy Thomas, Walter Thornbury, and, later, John Hollingshead and James Payn—were, to a greater or a smaller extent, imitators of the style of their Chief; and they were as proud of following his lead as the pupils of Rafaelle were proud of obeying his directions in painting the Loggie of

the Vatican, and as the pupils of Sir Peter Paul Rubens were proud to ride in their master's train and to aid him in producing the acres of allegories of which he was the guiding spirit and for which he laid down the cardinal lines. Dickens was the presiding and the predominating influence in *Household Words*. He did not often have to suggest articles for me, because in process of time I discovered that I could fix upon acceptable subjects myself. But the manuscript once handed in, I seldom, if ever, saw a proof thereof. First, Mr. W. H. Wills was the carefullest of proof-readers, and did everything necessary in the way of cutting down; and, next, Dickens took the revises in hand himself, and very often surprised me by the alterations—always for the better—which he made, now in the title, and now in the matter, of my "copy."

For example, I lived for many months in seclusion at a little village called Erith, in Kent, which has now become, I believe, quite a fashionable place. In the paucity of my inventiveness I gave to Erith the blunderingly transparent disguise of "Sherith"; but

Dickens, with happy boldness, changed the name to "Dumbledowndeary." Again, in a description of a visit by the possessor of a "tasting-order" to the wine-cellars of the London Docks, I incidentally hinted that on the return journey the visitor, if he travelled on the top of an omnibus, sometimes experienced very queer sensations; to which Dickens added in the revise the remark, "particularly when the bow of your cravat slides to the back of your head and hangs there like a bag-wig." These thoroughly Dickensian touches, added purely by his own autocratic will, did, I am convinced, a great deal of good to the productions of his young men; but, at the same time, the frequency of Dickensian tropes, illustrations, and metaphors, interpolated in the articles of his disciples, led to their being taunted with being slavish imitators of their leader.

One other item I touch upon with some reluctance, but with the strong persuasion that common justice should be done with respect to the editorial conduct of *Household Words*. Save in the cases of prolonged fiction, when the author's name was published, and of the

"Child's History of England," which was avowedly by Dickens, the entire journal was anonymous. This had two evil consequences to us, the "young men." In the first place, when an attractive article appeared in *Household Words*, which might have been the work either of one of my colleagues or of myself, people used to say that "Dickens was at his best that week," whereas in many cases in that particular number he had not written a single line except the weekly instalment of the "Child's History" aforesaid. I can say, for one, that I materially suffered from this systematic suppression of my name; for about 1853 or 1854 I purchased at M. Dentu's bookstall in the Palais Royal, Paris, a work in French purporting to be the "Nouveaux Contes de Charles Dickens," translated by M. Amédée Pichot; and among the ten or twelve essays and stories in this collection, I recognised translations of my own "Key of the Street," and, I think, of another article of my writing. Now this, judged by the present standard of literary ethics, was decidedly unfair to the rising authors who served their Chief with so much enthusiastic loyalty. In the next place, by this

strict preservation of the anonymous, Dickens unwittingly retarded, not only the literary, but also the commercial prospects of his staff. I did not repine; first, for the reason that I had no kind of idea that I should ever become an expert in journalism; and next, as I have before said, I had a trade by which I could earn my bread, were it even by engraving visiting cards or bill-heads for tradesmen.

Still, now, in my old age, I cannot be blind to the fact that I began to work with Dickens in 1851, and that when I temporarily severed my literary connection with him, about seven years afterwards, I was wholly and entirely unknown to the general public. In newspaper circles it was pretty well known that I wrote for *Household Words;* but beyond that I might have been a writer of auction-summaries, or a compiler of births, deaths, and marriages, for aught that the great reading public knew or cared. I do not think that Dickens, who was one of the kindliest, the justest, and the most generous of mankind, had the remotest notion that he was putting a bushel over the lights of his staff, that he was keeping them in that

obscurity which inevitably meant indigence, while he was attaining, and properly attaining, every year greater fame and greater fortune. It was a mistake on his part; but it was one that was shared by very many of the conductors of magazines and periodicals of his time. Only, very few of those magazines and periodicals were of the literary calibre of *Household Words*.

Often and often, when I was a book-devouring youth, have I asked myself whether the famous "Noctes Ambrosianæ" in *Blackwood* were really faithful records of nocturnal symposia at Mr. Ambrose's tavern in Edinburgh; and whether Christopher North, the Ettrick Shepherd, Mr. Tickler, and Odoherty, otherwise Dr. William Maginn, ever ate and drank, and said a tithe of the good things of which I read in the early volumes of "Maga." Of course, when I grew older, I learnt that when John Gibson Lockhart was writing his novel of "Valerius" he was in the habit of supping with Professor Wilson and Mr. Blackwood at Ambrose's hostelry; and that one evening, when the supper had been unusually succulent, and the fun exceptionally fast and furious, the future editor of

the *Quarterly Review* remarked: "What a pity that there has not been a shorthand writer here to take down all the good things that have been said"; and next day he produced a paper from memory and called it "Noctes Ambrosianæ": it being the first of the series, which Wilson subsequently elaborated with such splendid effect. Still, to my sanguine mind, it seemed as though I could hear the very voices of the carousing conclave:—Odoherty improvising Irish songs or proposing the health of Byron as "The Profligate Baron"; Hogg reciting in the broadest Lowland Scotch an imaginary and terrific autobiography of a lion in Central Africa; while Christopher, in his easy-chair, held forth with inimitable eloquence and vigour on all kinds of subjects, from deer-stalking to the Cato Street conspiracy; from the Rebellion of the 'Forty-Five to the Test and Corporation Acts. I could scent the perfume of Lockhart's cigar; to say nothing of the convivial odours of broiled kidneys, Finnan haddies, collops, stewed tripe, and hot whisky toddy. And I confess that it was with no slight amount of disappointment that I came to know afterwards that many of

the very raciest of the "Noctes" were composed by Wilson in the sober-sided morning, under the influence of no stimulant more exciting than soda water poured from a tea-pot.

I am reminded of the *Blackwood* high jinks when I remember that it was my pleasant lot, ere I was three-and-twenty years old, to participate in some veritable "Noctes," the fare of which rivalled in succulence the Edinburgh suppers at Mr. "Awmrose's"; while the conversation was frequently well worthy to be taken down by a stenographer. No such chronicle was ever made of the proceedings of those festive evenings; although it fortuitously happened that the presiding genius of the entertainments had been, in his youth, one of the most expert and diligent Parliamentary shorthand writers of the period. It was Charles Dickens, indeed, who was the host at our "Noctes"; and the scene thereof was the office of *Household Words*, in Wellington Street, Strand, aforesaid. The repasts were not suppers, but dinners—substantial dinners sent in from an hotel close by: in York Street, Covent Garden, if I remember aright. How often these social gatherings were held, I do not

know; but, to my great glee and contentment, I used to get an invitation to dine at "*H. W.*" office about once a month.

There were ladies' nights, too; but to these fêtes I never had the honour of being bidden; else, perhaps, I should have been able to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Gaskell, of Miss Adelaide Procter, and of Miss Dinah Muloch, all of whom I fancy were among the earliest lady contributors to "*H. W.*" On this point, however, I am not at all certain, for I must explain that in 1851-2 I had—with the exception of Dickens and Thackeray, Albert Smith and Shirley Brooks — absolutely no literary friends in London. As a boy, under my mother's roof, I had met and looked up to with veneration some of the greatest writers of the preceding generation; but when I first became a contributor to the periodical conducted by Dickens, I had no literary associates; belonged to no club, and was practically, from an intellectual point of view, alone in a metropolis then numbering some three millions of souls. But every time I dined at the hospitable board in Wellington Street I began more and more to acquire a

personal knowledge of members of that Republic of Letters of which I was at the time scarcely the humblest of citizens.

Nor, I frankly own, was it without some slight amount of trepidation that I found myself sitting at the same table with two very eminent men of letters connected with *Punch*, Douglas Jerrold and Mark Lemon to wit. Jerrold I had often seen, but had never spoken to.

He was much addicted to frequenting a cigar shop in King Street, Covent Garden—Kilpack's Divan, I think it was called—somewhere near that house of many mutations which was originally tenanted by Admiral Russell, of Cape La Hogue fame, and was afterwards socially celebrated as Evans's Supper Rooms. Often have I sidled into Kilpack's shop to buy a twopenny cheroot and catch a furtive glimpse of the author of "Men of Character" and "Mrs. Caudle's Curtain Lectures," as he sat on a cask of snuff, swinging his legs and dangling his eyeglass, and ever and anon removing his hat to pass the fingers of one hand through his grey mane of [redacted] Mark Lemon, you will remember, I had

met once before at the *Punch* Office, on the occasion of his smiling my mother and myself downstairs into Bouverie Street. He smiled again, when I was presented to him under a somewhat different aspect than that of a callow lad with a portfolio full of scratchy drawings; yet, somehow or another, it struck me that the second series of Lemonian smiles were not quite so affable as those which he had formerly bestowed on me. This impression on my part may have been due to some extent to the gnawing of a guilty conscience. It had chanced that about 1847 Alfred Bunn, the lessee and manager of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, who had been incessantly and mercilessly satirised by the usually good-natured Jester of Whitefriars, had resolved to administer a stinging retort to his implacable foes. I had some slight knowledge of Bunn, through having designed the grotesque masks for a Christmas pantomime called *Harlequin Hogarth;* and, at the irate manager's instigation, I drew on wood a series of caricatures, which were certainly of a nature not very complimentary to the editor of *Punch* and his staff. For example, Douglas Jerrold, who was characterised

as "Wronghead," was drawn with a body of a serpent, wriggling and writhing in a very unhandsome manner; Mr. Gilbert Abbot A'Beckett, who was dubbed "Sleekhead," was depicted in a barrister's wig and gown, from which, however, protruded a forked tail, while his figure was completed by a neat pair of hoofs. Finally, Mark Lemon, qualified as "Thickhead," appeared in his shirt-sleeves and a white apron, as a pot-boy, carrying a selected cabinet of pewter pots—an unkind allusion to his having formerly kept a little public-house by the sign of the Shakespeare's Head, in Wych Street, Strand.

These audacious sketches, obviously sinning against every canon of good taste, were produced to illustrate a virulent lampoon entitled: "A Word with *Punch*." The frontispiece, to boot, was also drawn by me. It was a parody of Richard Doyle's frontispiece to the real *Punch*; only the jester was represented standing in the pillory, with a most woebegone expression of countenance, surveying the penitential platform around him. The Dog Toby was seen hanging from a gallows; Punch's drum had a hole in the middle; the pandean pipes were broken and the puppets

were strewn around in ignoble confusion. The colophon to this satirical pamphlet was a bottle of physic and a box of pills:—the bottle having affixed to it a label bearing the inscription, "This dose to be repeated should the patients require it." The patients did *not* require it; and thenceforth *Punch* left Alfred Bunn alone. Taking all things into consideration, I am fain, at this distance of time, to arrive at the conclusion that Mark Lemon was *not* ecstatically glad to see me, when he met me at Dickens's table, since, in addition to the crime of which I was really guilty, that of having libellously drawn Lemon, Jerrold, and A'Beckett as a pot-boy, as a snake, and the Enemy of Mankind respectively, I was also debited with having further co-operated with the "poet" Bunn by writing a considerable quantity of the letterpress for the "Word with *Punch*." As for Jerrold, I do not think that he cared much about the skit. I heard that he once alluded to me as "a graceless young whelp," which possibly at the time I was; but we afterwards grew to be very good friends, and the night before I left London for Russia, in 1856, he bade me a most affectionate farewell;

coupling the good-bye with one piece of advice which I hope I have not ceased to bear in mind: "Study everybody and don't imitate anybody." That was his parting counsel.

Let me see if I can remember a few more of the most constant of the guests at the *Household Words* dinners. Dickens was, of course, in the chair; and W. H. Wills in the vice-chair. Then there would also be often present a white-haired old gentleman, Mr. Charles Knight, of whom, when I was a boy, I always used to think as sole author of the *Penny Magazine*, the "Penny Cyclopædia," and the "Pictorial History of England;" if he was not, indeed, in his sole self the incarnation of the entire Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. Another tall, white-headed veteran, do I also remember. This was Leigh Hunt. He had been granted a handsome pension in his old age, and was living as comfortably as ever a man of his desultory temperament could live, somewhere in Kensington, of which Old Court Suburb he wrote some delightful sketches in *Household Words*. I remember that he came to Wellington Street, not [redacted] cab or a brougham, but in one of those

anomalous vehicles that sometimes still make their appearance at weddings, and which used to be known as "glass coaches." Leigh Hunt, however, honestly qualified his conveyance as a "fly." He had rather a stately and old-fashioned manner of discourse; and as stately and old-fashioned were his gestures and general port and mien. I am not exactly certain as to whether there was a piano in the dining-room. Perhaps there was one, in view of the ladies' nights, of which I have spoken, since I have a dim remembrance of Hunt rising towards the close of the evening and telling us that he would sing us an Italian song, which he had used to sing to Byron—he pronounced the poet's name Birron—and Shelley. Only once did I meet the author of "Rimini" at Dickens's table; and that meeting must have been in the early days of my connection with "*H. W.*" In 1852 "Bleak House" was published; and in that work there was a character called Harold Skimpole, whom people persisted in identifying with Byron's friend.

Leigh Hunt, as a poet, I never held in any very enthusiastic estimation; but I admire him

intensely as a journalist. In journalism he was unconsciously one of my preceptors. Most students fairly well versed in the periodical literature of fifty years since are familiar with Leigh Hunt's "Town," his "Seer," his "Indicator," his "Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla," and cognate essays and criticisms; but very few, I imagine, have waded, as I have done, through the columns of the first ten volumes of the *Examiner*, commencing in 1808; or have read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested nearly every one of the leading articles on political, literary, and social subjects, contributed by Leigh Hunt to the journal which, in conjunction with his brother John, he founded. These papers were anonymous; but in addition to the internal evidence which they presented, they could always be recognised as Hunt's by the miniature effigy of a hand at the conclusion of the paper.

In addition to these veterans, a frequent attendant at the "*H. W.*" banquets was Mr. Richard Henry Horne, a once very well-known poet, dramatist, and miscellaneous writer. When I first knew him, he must have been just under fifty. He is best remembered now as the author

of "A New Spirit of the Age," an admirably critical work, in which he enjoyed the assistance of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Bell. Bell, the editor of a collection of the "British Poets," was also an intimate friend of Dickens's, and a frequent attendant at his symposia. It is to be feared that there are but few readers nowadays of Horne's epic poem, "Orion," which the writer, laudably ambitious to appeal to the public judgment at large, published at the price of one farthing. Even at that modest sum, the epic does not seem to have had a very extensive sale. Its author, who was one of the most adventurous of mankind, and had been roaming about the world ever since he was a boy, emigrated to Australia at the end of 1852, and tried his luck in the goldfields—not, I imagine, with any very bright success. Many years afterwards—in 1880, I think—I met him again at a dinner given by Mr. Barry Sullivan, the tragedian, to a circle of literary and dramatic friends at the Freemasons' Tavern. Horne must have been then nearly eighty years of age; but he was as fluent and instructive a talker, as an octogenarian, as he had been when I first saw him.

obscurity which inevitably meant indigence, while he was attaining, and properly attaining, every year greater fame and greater fortune. It was a mistake on his part; but it was one that was shared by very many of the conductors of magazines and periodicals of his time. Only, very few of those magazines and periodicals were of the literary calibre of *Household Words*.

Often and often, when I was a book-devouring youth, have I asked myself whether the famous "Noctes Ambrosianæ" in *Blackwood* were really faithful records of nocturnal symposia at Mr. Ambrose's tavern in Edinburgh; and whether Christopher North, the Ettrick Shepherd, Mr. Tickler, and Odoherty, otherwise Dr. William Maginn, ever ate and drank, and said a tithe of the good things of which I read in the early volumes of "Maga." Of course, when I grew older, I learnt that when John Gibson Lockhart was writing his novel of "Valerius" he was in the habit of supping with Professor Wilson and Mr. Blackwood at Ambrose's hostelry; and that one evening, when the supper had been unusually succulent, and the fun exceptionally fast and furious, the future editor of

the *Quarterly Review* remarked: "What a pity that there has not been a shorthand writer here to take down all the good things that have been said"; and next day he produced a paper from memory and called it "Noctes Ambrosianæ": it being the first of the series, which Wilson subsequently elaborated with such splendid effect. Still, to my sanguine mind, it seemed as though I could hear the very voices of the carousing conclave:—Odoherty improvising Irish songs or proposing the health of Byron as "The Profligate Baron"; Hogg reciting in the broadest Lowland Scotch an imaginary and terrific autobiography of a lion in Central Africa; while Christopher, in his easy-chair, held forth with inimitable eloquence and vigour on all kinds of subjects, from deer-stalking to the Cato Street conspiracy; from the Rebellion of the 'Forty-Five to the Test and Corporation Acts. I could scent the perfume of Lockhart's cigar; to say nothing of the convivial odours of broiled kidneys, Finnan haddies, collops, stewed tripe, and hot whisky toddy. And I confess that it was with no slight amount of disappointment that I came to know afterwards that many of

the very raciest of the "Noctes" were composed by Wilson in the sober-sided morning, under the influence of no stimulant more exciting than soda water poured from a tea-pot.

I am reminded of the *Blackwood* high jinks when I remember that it was my pleasant lot, ere I was three-and-twenty years old, to participate in some veritable "Noctes," the fare of which rivalled in succulence the Edinburgh suppers at Mr. "Awmrose's"; while the conversation was frequently well worthy to be taken down by a stenographer. No such chronicle was ever made of the proceedings of those festive evenings; although it fortuitously happened that the presiding genius of the entertainments had been, in his youth, one of the most expert and diligent Parliamentary shorthand writers of the period. It was Charles Dickens, indeed, who was the host at our "Noctes"; and the scene thereof was the office of *Household Words*, in Wellington Street, Strand, aforesaid. The repasts were not suppers, but dinners—substantial dinners sent in from an hotel close by: in York Street, Covent Garden, if I remember aright. How often these social gatherings were held, I do not

know; but, to my great glee and contentment, I used to get an invitation to dine at "*H. W.*" office about once a month.

There were ladies' nights, too; but to these fêtes I never had the honour of being bidden; else, perhaps, I should have been able to make the acquaintance of Mrs. Gaskell, of Miss Adelaide Procter, and of Miss Dinah Muloch, all of whom I fancy were among the earliest lady contributors to "*H. W.*" On this point, however, I am not at all certain, for I must explain that in 1851-2 I had—with the exception of Dickens and Thackeray, Albert Smith and Shirley Brooks—absolutely no literary friends in London. As a boy, under my mother's roof, I had met and looked up to with veneration some of the greatest writers of the preceding generation; but when I first became a contributor to the periodical conducted by Dickens, I had no literary associates; belonged to no club, and was practically, from an intellectual point of view, alone in a metropolis then numbering some three millions of souls. But every time I dined at the hospitable board in Wellington Street I began more and more to acquire a

returned to England, I would wander over to Ireland and loaf about Dublin and Cork, crossing St. George's Channel again, to stroll about Liverpool and Manchester and to make protracted wanderings on foot almost as far as the Lake Country. I suppose that at present, I do not walk six miles a week; but one day, still early in the 'fifties, I remember walking from Lancaster to Preston, a spell of twenty miles. All this idling and all these flittings to and fro were assignable to two causes. First, I loafed because I had as yet no liking for prolonged literary labour; and next I loved loafing for its own sweet sake. After 1853 I screwed my powers of application to the sticking-place, and never wrote less than one article a week for *Household Words*. It was necessary that I should do so, since my efforts to become an artist had ended in a disastrous collapse. I have already said that I never had more than one thoroughly working eye. I had had none as a child, and I ran a very great risk of losing both optics again in 1852, when I executed on a series of steel plates a prodigious military procession, engraved in aquatint, and representing the

funeral *cortége* of the great Duke of Wellington. The outlines of the thousands of figures and the hundreds of carriages—the horses were drawn by the well-known Henry Alken the Second—had to be etched in, before the process of aquatinting began; and the fumes evolved from the acid poured over the steel, played the very dickens with my unfortunate eyes. For many weeks I could neither write nor read; and when my eye and a quarter grew a little stronger, I laid down the etching-needle and the graver for good and all. It was a dreadful wrench; but I did not know then that for some five-and-thirty years I was to have the opportunity of writing in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph* about that art I had loved so fondly and wooed so unsuccessfully.

Amid all my vicissitudes, Dickens had always taken the warmest and kindest interest in me. I learned once, quite accidentally, from my friend Edmund Yates, that the Conductor of *Household Words* had made strenuous, but fruitless, efforts to obtain for me a position on the staff of *Punch*, not as an artist, but as a writer. I dare say Mark Lemon smiled his beamiest

when the proposal was made to him; but he didn't see it. Perhaps he remembered those little woodcut caricatures in the "Word with *Punch*," and his laugh, like that of the Hebrew prophet of old, may have been a bitter one. Often, again, did Dickens himself urge me to try my fortune as a dramatic author. He had been intensely interested in a pantomime called *Harlequin Billy Taylor*, which, in conjunction with my brother and Mr. George Ellis, I had written for Charles Kean at the Princess's in 1851. He was much interested in a version of the *Corsican Brothers*, which my brother and I brought out at the Old Surrey Theatre, under the management of Messrs. Creswick and Shepherd; but I had to tell him sorrowfully but firmly, at last, that I had no more capacity for the dramatist's art than for that of the poet.

Yet, although I was altogether and perhaps happily convinced that I had not the slightest chance of success as a playwright, I grew, about 1856, to have within me a restless, constantly recurring, and almost agonising consciousness that I ought to do something

more than write short stories and short sketches of things and people in *Household Words*. I was getting, I thought, able to do something stronger, more serious, usefuller than anything I had done before. But what that something was, I could not for a long time discover. The Crimean War was at its height, and my old friend Soyer had, mainly at the instance of the good and beautiful Duchess of Sutherland, the grandmother of the present Duke, undertaken a journey to Scutari and Balaclava, in the hope of ameliorating the condition of things culinary in the British army hospitals. More than once he hinted to me that he would be very glad if I accompanied him in the capacity of his friend and private secretary. He offered me very handsome terms, if I would accede to his wish; but somehow I shrank from accepting the offer. At the same time I was suffused by a burning desire to see something of the Russians and of the great Empire of Muscovy itself. It was too late to seek for employment as a special correspondent in the Crimea; and, besides, I was so young and so obscure, that, had I sent in

an application for such employment to the editor of any London newspaper, I should probably have received a polite refusal from the editors whom I approached.

The Crimean War had scarcely come to a close—the Treaty of Paris had hardly been ratified—when Dickens very gladly fell in with a suggestion of mine that I should go to St. Petersburg and Moscow, and tell the readers of *Household Words* what the Russians at home were like. I started from London in April, 1856, and returned home in October of the same year; and the papers which I wrote about Russia in "*H. W.*" were subsequently re-published in volume form under the title of "A Journey due North." The special correspondent was a personage very imperfectly understood by the editors and proprietors of newspapers and periodicals in 1856-7. All that I received—paying my own travelling expenses—from Dickens for my Russian expedition was £40 a-month. A little less than thirty years afterwards, when I went to Moscow, for the coronation of the Tsar Alexander III., the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* gave me a hundred pounds a-week.

CHAPTER III.

CHARLES DICKENS IN PARIS.

Dickens's Style Compared with Thackeray's—The Former's Contempt for Foreigners—His Insensibility to Art—Comparison with Cobbett—Anglo-Saxon Cockneys in Paris—A Visit from Dickens—Spurious Bohemians—Dickens's Generosity—Browsing on Fried Potatoes and Books—A French Tailor's Notion of "Arriving"—Dickens "Getting up" Macaulay—Dickens and Victor Hugo—Dickens and the elder Dumas—Dickens's Partiality for the Palais Royal Restaurants—Play-going—The Ary Scheffer Portrait.

With the exception of William Cobbett, I doubt whether there has ever been, among modern English writers, a more thoroughly typical example of the plain, downright Englishman than Charles Dickens. One of the best characteristics of his simple, manly, ringing English prose is the entire absence of Gallicisms therefrom; whereas the diction of Thackeray is rarely free from words or expressions of foreign origin, and from time to time, of altogether French, or Italian, or German expressions—"*Moi qui vous parle*," "*cari luoghi*," "*Ach Himmel!*" and the like—to say nothing of the morsels of Latin or Greek, with which the illustrious author of

"Vanity Fair" sometimes sprinkled his sentences, to remind his readers, and perhaps himself, that he had been a public school-boy and a University undergraduate, and that he had not quite forgotten his humanities. Thorough, vigorous, stubborn English sentiments are rarely absent from Dickens's miscellaneous essays; nor, when in his fictions you are reading the episodes of Continental life which occur in "Dombey and Son," in "Little Dorrit," and in "Our Mutual Friend," can you easily divest yourself of the impression that Dickens had, on the whole, a good-humoured contempt for foreigners—a contempt due, perhaps, in some measure to the fact that he was born in an epoch when an implacable war was raging between England and France, and that his earliest years were passed among persons in whose minds the memory of that war still lingered, as it did in that of Douglas Jerrold when he wrote the *Prisoner of War*.

The witty author of that comedy had, ere the peace of 1814 came, been rated as a middy on board the guard-ship at Portsmouth; while Dickens's father was a clerk

in the Navy Pay Office at Portsmouth. This contempt, in Dickens's "Pictures from Italy," is aggravated into something like savage and ignorant ridicule. The "Pictures from Italy" is not by any means a good-natured book. Dickens had not the slightest knowledge, or love, or even respectful appreciation, of what is called "High Art;" and indeed his acquaintance with art of any kind beyond the illustrations to his own works, and a sympathetic admiration for his congener Hogarth, was extremely limited; and because he could not understand the pictorial and plastic masterpieces which he saw in Rome and in other Continental cities, he sneered at the artists themselves, and derided the people who could understand and did admire the immortal productions of Italian art. Clarkson Stanfield and Daniel Maclise were also among his intimate friends; so was Marcus Stone, and he was an early patron of Mr. W. P. Frith, R.A., whose delightful picture of "Dolly Varden" found a purchaser in Dickens. "Oliver Twist" and the "Sketches by Boz" naturally brought him in contact with George Cruikshank. Through the "Old Curiosity Shop" he made the acquaintance

of George Cattermole; and his early relations with Hablot K. Browne ("Phiz") were of the friendliest kind. Still, although throughout his career he had numerous artistic friends, I am persuaded that he cared for them much more as social companions than as masters of their art.

Notwithstanding his lack of comprehension or of affection for pictures and statues, and his being provided into the bargain with an ample stock of the soundest of old John Bull prejudices—prejudices which he has himself slily laughed at in his sketch of Mr. Podsnap—the great novelist was fond of Continental travel; his taste for which may have been, no doubt, to a considerable extent, cultivated and enhanced by his close association with Wilkie and Charles Collins, both of whom had passed nearly the whole of their boyhood in Rome. Dickens's long residence in Genoa; the frequent journeys which he made to different cities in the Peninsula, rarely in search of the picturesque or the romantic, but always in sedulous quest of the humorous, the odd, and the grotesque; his subsequent sojourns in Switzerland and in Paris, all served to nourish within him a liking for

wandering; not indeed very far afield, but over well-trodden tourists' routes, where he could find tolerably comfortable accommodation, and amusing surroundings. He seems, by hard application, to have become a fair French scholar: so at least I gather from sundry evidences in Mr. Forster's "Life." I never heard him *speak* French, and am consequently no judge whatever of his proficiency in the pronunciation of that language; but I have seen letters written by him in very fair colloquial French, and I have no doubt that he could hold his own in conversation with Frenchmen.

Again I cannot help coupling him with Cobbett, for the reason that, as you probably know as well as I do, the virulent editor of *The Political Register* learned French thoroughly after his discharge from the army; resided for a long time in a French provincial town; emigrated to the United States when the French Revolution was at its height, and earned for some time a livelihood by teaching English to the French emigrants, with whom he could converse in their native tongue with great

fluency. Yet have I been told by aged people who knew Cobbett well, that although his French was grammatically unimpeachable, he pronounced the language execrably; and it strikes me that it is difficult thoroughly to understand, or unreservedly to like a nation whose vernacular you are unable properly to pronounce. I grant that Dickens had mastered the structure of the French tongue. Cobbett's linguistic attainments served him as a bread-winner; but I cannot detect in his writings any symptoms of personal liking for the French. It is possible, too, that Dickens may have read the more prominent works of Victor Hugo and of Alexandre Dumas; but of any extensive familiarity with French literature or men of letters he was practically destitute; nor have I ever known him quote any well-known passage from a standard French author, or heard him ask any questions about the personality or the idiosyncrasies of any of the historic men and women who have been the glory of French literature. The "Tale of Two Cities" is a dramatic but very superficial picture of French life and manners at the period of the Revolution,

and not a tithe so realistic as the wonderful conspectus of the Riots of 'Eighty in "Barnaby Rudge." Here, again, the case of Cobbett recurs. That the furious old pamphleteer knew the fabric of the French Temple of Speech, from basement to roof, is undeniable; still you fail, when he happens to allude to France or the French in his writings, to discern that he had anything beyond the slightest acquaintance with the works of Boileau, or Molière, or Fénelon, or any other French princes of the pen.

It has thus not been without a deliberate purpose that I have prefixed these remarks to a chapter on Charles Dickens in Paris. It happened, by a curious concatenation—don't laugh at me for using the long-tailed word; it is in Ben Jonson—of circumstances, that there were gathered together in Paris, in 1855–6, and continually travelling backwards and forwards between London and the Gay City, at least a dozen young Britons, most of whom were either regular members of the staff of *Household Words* or casual contributors to its columns; and who might, without much outrage to terminology, be

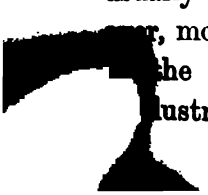
called "Anglo-Parisian Cockneys"; that is to say, they one and all spoke French almost as fluently as they did English, and they were as thoroughly well acquainted with that section of Cockaigne which was known as "Bohemia" on the banks of the Seine, as they were with Bohemian Cockneydom on the shores of the Thames. Pre-eminent among these Anglo-Saxon Cockneys was my dear friend, the late Blanchard Jerrold, the eldest son of Douglas Jerrold, who (Douglas) was one of the inner Dickens-coterie; the other members of which were Forster, Maclise, Stanfield, Mark Lemon, John Leech, and—until he retired into private life in the country—William Charles Macready.

Blanchard Jerrold, a most prolific and industrious writer, was a constant contributor to *Household Words;* but as he had married early in life, and given hostages to Fortune long before 1855, he preferred, when in Paris, to settle down in a comfortable *appartement* in some street off the main Boulevards, and only paid flying but amicable visits to the band of pure and perfect Bohemian Cockneys, who usually affected as a residence, and sometimes as a refuge, the

Quartier Latin or the Rue de Seine, on what we used to call the "Surrey side of the river." Some of us—for of that bright band I was an obscure member—even strayed so far as the Place du Luxembourg; but most frequently it was in the Rue de l'École de Médecine or in the Rue St. Jacques that we took up our abode; often up five pair of stairs. Béranger has told us in immortal verse how happy one can be in a garret at the age of twenty; and we, whose ages ranged from twenty to twenty-eight, did not belie the sentiment conveyed in the poet's refrain. Blanchard Jerrold, as I have said, we had but seldom with us; but as permanent companions and chums were Robert Barnabas Brough, Henry Sutherland Edwards, William Brough, Augustus and Julius Mayhew—the brothers of Henry Mayhew, the great and shamefully ignored compiler of that amazing human document, "London Labour and the London Poor." We read the French papers as attentively as we did the English ones; and one of our number, Edwards, contributed articles in French to the then young and struggling *Figaro*. We lived

altogether "à la Française"; repaired on the rare evenings when we had any surplus cash to the Closerie des Lilas or the Chaumière, to laugh and smoke and see the "Chahut" or the "Tulipe Orageuse" danced by adventurous practitioners on the light fantastic toe; and we were all as poor as Job, and as merry as grigs.

Situated as we were, the periodical visits of Charles Dickens to the French capital between 1851 and 1855 were, to the little colony of Anglo-Parisian Bohemian Cockneys who contributed to *Household Words*, a source of great joy and brightly pleasurable expectation. We knew well enough that the Chief would like to see us, his young men; that he would be eager to learn from us all that was going on in the way of fun and adventure in Paris; that he would ask us to luncheon and to dinner, either at his own apartments or at some "swell" restaurant in the Palais Royal, or on those Boulevards which the exiguous condition of our finances usually forbade us from patronising; and more-



r, more than one of us, on reading an *entrefilet* he *Constitutionnel* or the *Débats* that the ustre Romancier, Sir Dickens," or "Lord

Charles Boz," had arrived in Paris, and had "descended" at a given hotel or private mansion, felt a cheerful glow of anticipation in the remembrance that Dickens was, from the *Household Words* point of view, a beneficent necromancer, whose magic wand could waft into our empty pockets the blessed boon called "money on account."

When, nowadays, some friend who goes more into the world than I do points out to me in the *foyer* of the Opera, or the stalls of the theatre, some youthful individual whom he pronounces to be a deuced clever fellow, but "an out-and-out Bohemian," I do not stare at him with astonishment—to do so would be very rude;—but I ask myself mentally whether this young gentleman is really an inhabitant of Bohemia at all, and whether he could even find the place of the city of Prague on the map. He is clad in faultless evening garb; his cravat is tied with exquisite symmetry; he is clean-shaven, well brushed and oiled and perfumed; and if I mistake not, he has a gardenia at his button-hole, a ring on one finger, a watch-guard at his fob, and something that twinkles

and sparkles in the solitary stud of his beautifully got-up shirt-front. Can this well-dressed, well-groomed youth have anything to do with Bohemia? Why, if you accost him, he will talk about his clubs; and he may ask you whether you were at the Royal Academy Conversazione, or how is it you were not at Kempton Park or at Sandown, when "Brother to Cauliflower" beat "Two Lovely Black Eyes," or "Tommy-make-Room-for-your-Uncle" ran for the "Consolation Stakes." My esteemed young sirs, unless I am altogether wrong, you have no kind of comprehension of what the Bohemia of forty years ago was like, or what manner of people inhabited it.

We, who like old Brer Rabbit, "lay low" in the Students' Quarter of Paris and kept ourselves as far as it was possible aloof from the affluent but unsympathetic British Philistines who frequented the fashionable boulevards and the great hotels of the Madeleine and the Rue de la Paix quarter, hailed the coming of such a dispenser of good things as Dickens, because we were, as a rule, not miserably nor desperately poor, but philosophically, joyously, and to some extent it would seem voluntarily so. Would

you know the principal reason for our indigence? That reason was, that most of us were about the idlest young dogs that squandered away their time on the pavements of Paris or of London. *We would not work.* I declare in all candour and honesty, that, from the year 1852 to the year 1856, both inclusive, the average number of hours per week which I devoted to literary production did not exceed four; that is to say, during the years just mentioned, I usually wrote one article a week for *Household Words;* and I very rarely contributed to any other publication. At the present moment, at an advanced period of life, I am able to work habitually from seven to eight hours six days in every week, and I do not feel at all the worse for it. I should wish, however, to hint that although in our Anglo-Parisian Cockney-Bohemian days, some of us were idle in the way of turning positive "copy," which could be sold for drachmas and leptas and so forth, none of us were idle in the sense of dawdling about with our hands in our pockets, or going to sleep in the daytime, or inscribing our initials with a wet finger on a dusty window-pane—the last a

recreation which I take to be the acme of pure and simple indolence. Blanchard Jerrold, having a wife and family, was forced to be industrious; and Sutherland Edwards, although he did not produce much "copy," had occult transactions with sundry men of business, English and French, who were always on the eve of bringing out patents, by working which millions of francs were to be gained; and the negotiations involved in these complex financial transactions led to Edwards being constantly invited to *déjeúners* and dinners at those patrician restaurants for which we so often but so vainly sighed. Nor, in my own case, although I was scandalously barren of literary output during five long years, do I think that I was really wasting my time. I was continually, although unconsciously, learning:—now the great object-lessons of life with which the streets of Paris were replete; now the lessons of history and politics which every day's issue of the newspapers spread before me; and this sauntering education was alternated with absolutely laborious and minute study of the treasures of literature in the public libraries,

or in the ragged tomes which I picked up for a few sous at the bookstalls on the quays.

These labours, at the time, did not bring me a doit; and yet I passionately loved the toil of study, altogether unfruitful in money-bringing as it was. I could fag for hours over dead-and-gone languages; painfully transcribe all kinds of curious, and as it then appeared, useless lore, pore over and master the secrets of artistic and mechanical processes all day long; and often, when we had no joyous carousal going on, late into the night I was reading my eyes dim.

It was the sitting down to the writing of "copy" that I detested; it was the making of a tale of bricks for a certain wage that I loathed; and I have often said that for many years I never sat down without anguish to the composition of "copy," and never rose from the completed task without exultation.

I suppose that there were few young Britons in Paris late in 1855 or early in 1856 who were more comically "hard up" than I was. For the time being I was alone: the other members of our cheerful crew being in England, chiefly occupied in tracking the wary five-pound note to its lair;

and I was enjoying "the desolate freedom of the wild ass" in a big, old, and intolerably dirty *maison garnie* in the Luxembourg quarter. Dinner, happily, was not a wholly unrealisable quantity. There was on the other side of the river, in the Rue de la Michodière, a little *crèmerie*, or shop for the sale of milk, eggs, cheese, butter, and the like, kept by a good old lady, whom, although she was a spinster, we called "Madame" Busque. She was an admirable cook; and in the little dark room behind her shop she would serve to six or eight of us, at a ridiculously low tariff, little dinners which were simply triumphs of *la haute cuisine bourgeoise*. Not all her customers were English: they comprised a few Americans, who afterwards rose to great distinction; and among her transatlantic guests I have met Horace Greeley. Now, Madame Busque gave "tick" in the blithest possible manner to her customers. She knew that they would all pay when they could; but unfortunately the good old lady was not rich, and her resources were sometimes within measurable distance of exhaustion through the credit which she gave; and some

of us, who were most deeply on the wrong side of her ledger, felt bound, in common conscience, to stay on the "Surrey side," and to abstain from availing ourselves too frequently of her hospitality until we could give her some "money on account."

And where, I should like to know, was the "money on account" to come from, unless we obtained a little cash in advance from the beneficent genius who had written a book called "Pickwick." I, for one, knew that there was little use of applying too frequently for remittances to worthy Mr. W. H. Wills, Dickens's assistant-editor. He was a long-suffering controller of the cash-box, and would let you overdraw to the extent of, say, twenty pounds. After that he would write you a humorous note, which did *not* contain a cheque, but which hinted that it was a law of the Medes and Persians at the office of *Household Words* that, before any more money was transmitted to you, a certain commodity called "copy" must have been received in Wellington Street, Strand. I have not the slightest shame in mentioning these little facts; because, in after life, it has been

my lot to pay "money on account" for considerable sums to a great many people, many of whom, owing doubtless to some strange phenomenon of memory, forgot to repay me. But, let me hasten to say that, although we young Anglo-Parisian Cockneys, Bohemians to the backbone as we were, had perforce to defer to the decision of Mr. W. H. Wills in Wellington Street, we rarely failed to find that when Charles Dickens was in Paris he became at once the smiling captive of our bow and spear. He knew well enough that he would get the necessary "copy" out of us sooner or later; although, at the end of one exceptionally disastrous financial year, when I was no less than seventy pounds to the bad, he laughingly suggested that a sponge should be applied to the slate, and that then "we could begin again" quite comfortably. I need scarcely say that I at once and unreservedly acquiesced in this cheery proposal.

Reluctant, therefore, to impinge too seriously on the straitened exchequer of the estimable Madame Busque, I was contented to enjoy what may be called a "square meal" at the *crèmerie*

of the Rue de la Michodière about twice a week. For the rest, it is not good for a young man between twenty-one and twenty-five that he should dine copiously every day. Growing lads want plenty of meat and bread to solidify their tissues and brace up their nerves; but young men between the ages I have mentioned would take no harm, but rather good, by half-fasting three or four times a week on bread and cheese and apples, or whatever else they can get. The deficiency may be most fitly supplied by tobacco. At the same time, although you can well dispense with dinner occasionally, you *must* have something of the nature of a sufficing breakfast to enable you to get through the day in a proper frame of body and mind. In Paris you can, or at least you could in the brave days when I was twenty-one and twenty-five, breakfast at a rate of cheapness which was simply marvellous. For two or three sous you could get a great bowl of chocolate or *café au lait* and a hunch of bread at a *crèmerie;* and if you wanted any little relishing dainties, you could, at a correspondingly trifling expenditure, buy a hard egg boiled

in cochineal, or a modicum of boiled spinach mashed into a smooth paste at the greengrocer's, or a little garlic-seasoned sausage, or haply a neat's tongue or a pig's foot at the establishment of a *charcutier*. Then again, if you wished to breakfast while you were perambulating the long line of bookstalls and print-stalls on the quays, the most convenient breakfast was a halfpennyworth of hot fried potatoes, which being carefully sprinkled with salt, and placed in a conical paper bag, you disposed of in the hinder pocket of your coat. Then you strolled leisurely from the Quai Voltaire to the Institut, reading as you walked, and nibbling a fried potato now and then—browsing, if I may call it so, both in a physical and an intellectual sense.

I am afraid that even penny bowls of chocolate and halfpennyworths of spinach or fried potatoes were becoming rather unattainable objects when, the Crimean War being at its height, I read, with jubilation in my heart, that Dickens had arrived in Paris. As for the neats' tongues, or the garlic-seasoned sausages, they seemed for the nonce to belong to some

previous state of existence. Fortunately I had a tailor, a Frenchman, as trusting as the worthy Gaul who lent Thackeray a thousand francs, and he not only gave me credit as liberal as that which Madame Busque extended to her *protégés*, but would encourage and clap me on the back, and tell me that sooner or later I should "arrive." "The day will come, *mon ami*," he would say, waving his yard-measure, "when you will come to me for many *pantalons*, and when you will measure forty inches round the waist." That corporeal circumference evidently was his idea of a state of "arrival." Good man! the Versaillais soldiery shot him dead after the Commune.

It was either in the darksome winter of 1855 or in the early spring of 1856 that a *commissionnaire* brought me one morning a note from Dickens, saying that he was staying in furnished apartments in the Champs Élysées, and that he would be glad if I would come over to breakfast with him at noon, and have a talk about things in general. His domicile was on the first floor, over a coachbuilder's, rather high up the Champs Élysées, on the left-hand

side as you ascend towards the Arc de Triomphe. It was a spacious suite of apartments which he occupied, handsomely furnished enough, but very dark. Here I found him sitting in a big armchair with a copy of Macaulay's "History of England" before him, into which he had dug, so to speak, his elbows resolutely; while he held his head between his hands and pored into the pages. You can realise the idea of the attitude of the man of indomitably Strong Will who had addressed himself to a task which was not very grateful to him, but which he had inflexibly made up his mind to accomplish. I am glad to know that my memory has not betrayed me in saying that it was Macaulay's History that Dickens was reading that noon in Paris; for, turning to a biography of the great historian of the Revolution, I find that the two first volumes of the History were published in 1848, and that in 1855 the third and fourth volumes appeared, "and were read more eagerly than the most popular of novels." Dickens's countenance when he pushed the volume aside certainly did not exhibit the expression which should belong

to a delighted novel-reader. He looked, to tell the truth, slightly fatigued; but he had determined to master Macaulay, just as, before he wrote "The Tale of Two Cities," he doggedly went through the whole of Carlyle's "French Revolution."

He had a great deal to talk about, for the epoch was a most anxious one. Our heroic soldiers in the Crimea were rotting away with sickness and semi-starvation. Dickens, in common with all true Englishmen of that time, earnestly sympathised with the brave men dying by hundreds on the shores of the Black Sea; and he expressed well-deserved admiration for the splendid efforts then being made by the special correspondent of the *Times* in the Crimea, William Howard Russell, to call the attention of the people of Great Britain to the deplorable condition of our army in the Tauric Chersonese. I remember, too, how at the same time he had words of noble appreciation of the Crimean work of Florence Nightingale. Then, when we had lunched and were enjoying a fragrant "weed"—Dickens was a regular but not, as his ancient disciple was and is, an inveterate

smoker—he began to talk a little "shop." He wanted a series of articles written on a special question in "*H. W.*" Albert Smith had just sent him a pamphlet entitled "The Great Hotel Nuisance," in which the author of "Mr. Ledbury and his Friend Jack Johnson" denounced the then existing English hotel system—the stuffy rooms, the cumbrous four-post beds, the monotonous cookery, the costly wines, the exorbitant wax-candles, the heavy charges, and in particular the exaction of preposterously inflated fees to servants.

Albert wished to see established "grand hotels," on the American and the French systems, mingled with that which had long prevailed in Switzerland; but Dickens was, as I have more than once hinted, strongly conservative in a good many social matters, and he rather leaned towards the old-fashioned English hotel, with its old port, its old sherry, its old landlord and landlady, its old bill of fare, its sirloin of beef, leg of mutton, boiled fowl and broiled veal cutlet, and its old scale of charges. However, he left the matter entirely in my hands for discussion and treatment; and I wrote a

series of papers describing such English and continental hotels as I was acquainted with. I added some notices of the hotels of Italy and the United States, with neither of which countries I was in 1855 personally acquainted; but the kind Chief touched up my raw material in the proof, and corrected the more glaring errors into which I had fallen. I saw him during the remaining fortnight of his stay in Paris nearly every day, and I need scarcely remark that if any difficulties from which I was suffering in the direction of that "eternal want of pence which vexes public men" had to be gently intimated to Dickens, his friendly hand at once smoothed away the little asperities of financial embarrassment. Most of his young men, as I have already said, were chronically cashless; and I—for the reason that I was so scandalously idle—was about the most impecunious of the staff. Still, he knew that he could reckon upon extracting an article of from four to six pages out of me every week; which was more than he could do with his other contributors.

He talked to me a great deal about Victor Hugo, to whom he had once paid a visit at the

poet's residence in the Place Royale; but it could not have been in 1855 that he had met with the author of "Notre Dame de Paris," in the city the mediæval chronicle of which the latter has so magnificently recorded. In 1855 Victor Hugo was an exile in Guernsey, and it must have been before the *Coup d'État* that Dickens and he foregathered. Still, I recall the powerfully dramatic account which Dickens gave of his first interview with Hugo: the poet—who was about as vain as Juno's whole team of peacocks may be supposed to have been—posing in studied attitudes in one chimney corner; and from time to time gently passing one hand over that exceptionally lofty brow of his; while, at the opposite corner of the hearth, sat Madame Hugo, "a little, sallow lady with dark, flashing eyes, and lips that could be angry," drinking up every word of the utterances of the spouse whose genius she admired so enthusiastically, and whose life she has narrated in language of such true womanly appreciation and devotion. Alexandre Dumas the Elder was, however, in Paris in 1855, and Dickens was much interested when I told him

that the younger Alexandre had been my form-fellow at college, and had not as a boy of sixteen given any peculiarly bright promise of the superb talent which he was afterwards to develop.

I am not quite certain as to whether Dickens ever met Alexandre the Elder in the flesh. The author of the "Trois Mousquetaires" had, it is true, written to him proposing a nocturnal rendezvous of a somewhat romantic character. Dickens was to be at the corner of a certain street, at a certain hour, on a certain night. Then he was to be accosted by an individual muffled in a mantle of Spanish cut, who was to escort him to a carriage drawn by four horses; and this equipage was to convey him goodness knows whither: the final cause of the entire transaction being probably the entertainment of Dickens by Alexandre and a chosen circle of friends at a choice supper in a *cabinet particulier* at the Café Anglais or the Maison Dorée. I dined very frequently with my Chief during his stay in Paris; and he exhibited a strong partiality for feasting at the Palais Royal restaurants, which at that period had

not completely lost the prestige which at present seems wholly to have departed from them. The Boulevards restaurants he thought too noisy, and their *cuisine* he deemed slightly too greasy; but under the arcades of the Palais Royal there was Véry's, there was the Trois Frères Provençaux, and there was the Café Corazza or Restaurant d'Ouix, which last was kept by an old gentleman who had been, I think, Maître d'Hotel to Charles X., and between the courses would tell us solemn stories of the good old times, when in court dress and powder, and with a sword by his side, he waited at the Tuileries or at St. Cloud behind the chair of the Most Christian King. Of course, the Second Empire being in full swing in 1856, M. d'Ouix—if that was his name—had nothing to say against the Imperial sway. Still, reading between the lines of his courteous chatter, it was evident that in his heart of hearts he firmly believed that the glories of the French *cuisine* went out with the Elder Bourbons.

After dinner we would sometimes go for an hour to one of the great Boulevard *cafés;* but

more frequently we would repair to the theatre. I suppose there never was a more assiduous playgoer than Charles Dickens; while oddly enough, although I have always taken a strong interest in the drama and in things dramatic, and have numbered among my friends scores of the most eminent professors of the dramatic art, I have always had from my early manhood an intense dislike for witnessing dramatic performances. I am passionately fond of the opera; but I don't like the play. The reason for my aversion therefrom may be that as a lad, between fifteen and eighteen, four-fifths of my time were spent within the walls of a theatre; and I possibly grew as cloyed, satiated, and nauseated with plays and players as the young lady-assistants in a pastrycook's shop are said to be satiated with pastry after they have had, say, three weeks *carte blanche* in the way of jam-tarts, sausage-rolls, mince-pies, and Bath buns.

The tragedies performed at the Théâtre Français and the Odéon were not much to Dickens's taste. He preferred the light operatic burlesques at the Bouffes Parisiens. Offenbach

was then in all his glory; and *La Belle Helène*, *Orphée aux Enfers*, and *Le Bœuf Apis* were pieces that all Paris went crazy after. The Bouffes Parisiens theatre, as most of us are aware, is situated in the Passage Choiseul.

It was during his stay in Paris in 1855 that Dickens sat for his portrait to the famous artist, Ary Scheffer. The painter of the "Christus Consolator" and the two "Mignons" was at the period named nearly seventy years of age, and three years afterwards he died; but as yet no decline in his artistic capacity was apparent. The story is too well known to be dwelt upon, that Ary Scheffer, who was of German extraction, but whose birthplace was Dordrecht in Holland, told Dickens when he first sat to him that he looked less like a man of letters than some Dutch admiral of the seventeenth century—Tromp or De Ruyter, for instance.

CHAPTER IV.

PARIS FIFTY YEARS AGO.

A Hackney Coach of 1839—A Vituperative Jehu—On Board the *Harlequin*—A Boiled Leg of Mutton—At Boulogne—Extortionate and Profane Boatmen—The Gendarme—Passports—The Custom House—"Unpacking" the Author—The *Diligence*—French Scenery—A Band of Conscripts—A *Berline*—Beauvais and St. Denis—In Paris.

As a strict matter of fact, a little more than fifty-four years ago; still, to name half a century will serve. A gloriously sunny hot August morning, slightly too sultry, perhaps, in the narrow, tortuous streets which in the year 1839 straggled from St. Paul's Churchyard into Thames Street, and so to some pier or stairs, the name of which I have forgotten; but at the river's brink the air was cooler, and I did not mop my youthful face quite so frequently with my pocket-handkerchief. We were three passengers in a hackney coach of the bad, clumsy, old-fashioned pattern, which equipage had been chartered the evening before to convey us from the Quadrant, Regent Street, to the pier or stairs close to London Bridge,

where my mother, my sister, and myself were to take ship for Boulogne.

A truly old-time coach—heavy, lumbering, ramshackle, and dirty. Its colour was yellow, and its panels were embellished with coats of arms which were once no doubt very sumptuous, but the blazonry of which had been partly obliterated by perhaps a generation and a half of wind and rain. It had possibly, at some remote period, been the equipage of a duke; but its glories had long since faded. The boarded floor was masked by evil-smelling straw, and a coarse baize drapery beneath the box replaced the doubtless once splendid hammer-cloth.

> Ben was a hackney coachman bold,
> Tamaroo!
> How he'd swear, and how he'd drive:
> Number Three Hundred and Sixty-five.
> Tamaroo!

Thus runs the old jingle. Of the precise number of the vehicle which brought us from the West End to the City I have no remembrance; still the "hackney coachman bold" who was our Jehu must certainly have been a lineal descendant of Ben. How he drove, and how he swore when

four shillings and sixpence were tendered to him as his fare: the sum being only one shilling above the legal tariff! He wore a drab great-coat with many capes, did this vituperative Jarvey. The garment was then most appropriately termed a "wrap-rascal"; but see the irony of fate and the strange revenges of time! The most fashionable ladies in London and Paris have of late years disported themselves in tasteful upper garments of drab or brown with many capes and adorned with mother-o'-pearl buttons nearly as large as cheeseplates; but the fashionable fair ones of 1894 would be dreadfully indignant were they told that their natty coaching paletôts were built, buttons and all, on the lines of the "wrap-rascals" of the past.

We did not get on board the steamer without at least twenty minutes of noise, confusion, wrangling, and bad language on the wharf, or at the stairs, or at the pier whence we embarked. In the year 1839, so it strikes me, people in general were in the habit of swearing more terribly than ever the British Army did in Flanders in my Uncle Toby's time. The porters who fought for

our luggage swore at each other and at us; nay, the New Policeman—very new in '39—in a swallow-tail coat, a chimney-pot hat, and white trousers, who endeavoured to maintain order, was forced to express himself in terms which this refined age would certainly condemn as coarse. It was lucky for us that the tide served so that we could go on board directly from the shore, and were thus saved from experiencing the tender mercies of Thames watermen able to give points to the most vituperative of hackney coachmen in the way of extortion and anathemas.

At last, after much pushing and scuffling, we contrived, in company with about thirty other passengers, to reach the deck of the paddle-wheel steamer *Harlequin:* to find the captain on the bridge swearing at the first mate; who swore at the second; who, on his part, solaced his feelings by not only swearing at but cuffing the cabin-boy. My remembrance of the steamer *Harlequin* on that trip from the Thames to Boulogne is very scanty. I recollect that close to the companion-ladder there was screwed to the bulwark a tin collecting-box for the funds of some Mariners'

Society somewhere; and that directly I saw that casket my fingers instinctively closed on the sum of seven shillings and sixpence good and lawful money, the gift of a dear maiden cousin on the eve of my departure for foreign parts, which treasure reposed in my right-hand trousers pocket. And, while I clutched my pelf, did I mentally register a vow that no Society of any kind should have a doit of my pocket-money. I know not whether little boys and girls in this happy age are systematically and almost incessantly cozened out of their cash for the purpose of assisting Societies; but in the 'thirties we were dreadfully oppressed in this respect; and I have an especial and vindictive recollection of a japanned tin collecting-box surmounted by the effigy of a kneeling negro extending his chained hands in an attitude of supplication and asking you, through the medium of a label issuing from his mouth, whether he was not a Man and a Brother? That meant that you were expected to drop coins into the slot of the box in aid of the funds of some Anti-Slavery Society. Slavery in the British Colonies had been abolished; but the Man and the Brother continued to groan in

America, Brazil, the Spanish West Indies, and elsewhere; and small boys and girls were required to relieve his woes by contributing to the begging-box. The only other memory which I retain of the *Harlequin*—a long, low vessel, with very large portholes and a very tall funnel—was in connection with the dinner, the *pièce de résistance* at which was a boiled leg of mutton, which seemed to me to be of colossal size, and from which were pendant festoons of woolly-looking fat. Ugh! The sight of that boiled leg of mutton—we were off Margate at the time, and the sea was pretty rough—at once led to my being escorted to the ladies' cabin and consigned to the care of a compassionate stewardess. I have travelled many thousands of miles, on many seas, since my first trip on board the *Harlequin*, and have not, I believe, been sea-sick more than three times in the course of all my voyages; but at dinner-time on the ocean wave, whenever the steward uncovers the dishes, and I espy a boiled leg of mutton, I immediately close my eyes and turn away my head.

We made Boulogne, I think, about eleven o'clock at night; but we were not so fortunate

as to be able to come right up to the pier, and had to land in boats. The passage from the steamer to the shore was a brief one; but it was marked by an episode altogether characteristic of the epoch. A franc a head was the sum which we were told we were to pay for the transit; but about midway the French boatmen suddenly stopped rowing, and informed us that they did not intend to pull another stroke without an additional franc per head. I could speak French well enough before I went to France; and to my mind it seemed that the Boulogne boatmen in the way of swearing were fully up to the mark of the London "Ben, the hackney coachman bold," with his "wrap-rascal" of many capes. However, we had to submit to the extortion. We landed, and to my extreme delight I found myself in the long-and-lovingly-looked-for land of France. It was a beautiful moonlight night; but the lunar radiance did not hinder the little sallow, snub-nosed, high-cheek-boned, fiercely-moustached, and not over-clean Custom House officers from poking their huge lanterns in everybody's face and staring at us as though they were more than half

persuaded that we belonged to the dangerous classes.

Presently I became aware of the imposing presence of the French gendarme. I can see him now—tall, stalwart, rigid, with one hand sternly caressing his spiky moustache; austerely military in his big cocked hat, his blue coat, and white epaulettes; the breast of the uniform crossed by the yellow bandolier, or sword-belt, which has been the peculiar badge of the French gendarmerie ever since Valois times. Under many aspects have I since beheld that commanding type of the French military police. As the express train whirls you, now, from Boulogne to Paris you will generally be able to discern the yellow-belted gendarme, stately and immobile, on the platform of each station that you pass. I have watched him at criminal trials sternly patronising, as it were, the poor devil who sits beside him on the *banc des accusés*. I have met him at French fairs. I have renewed my acquaintance with him in Algeria. I have even come across him in Mexico when the French were occupying the Aztec capital; and to my thinking he has never

abated one jot of his rigidity—was ever a gendarme known to smile? *—and his habit of caressing that spiked moustache seems to be a hereditary one. When I gaze upon him my thoughts invariably recur to the gendarme of August, 1839. He looked, then, as though he was just making up his mind to take you into custody; and there was precisely the same kind of expression on his *lignum vitæ* visage the last time that I had the honour of contemplating him in Paris. Practically, we were all of us taken into custody that summer night at Boulogne; since no less than two hours elapsed before we were allowed to proceed to our hotel. There was a furious squabble, to begin with, among the brawny short-skirted females in *sabots*, who claimed the exclusive right of shouldering the passengers' baggage and conveying it to the Custom House. These ladies, we were told, were the widows of fishermen, and were specially privileged by the Municipality of Boulogne to

* There is, to be sure, an old French rhyme running somewhat in this wise:

"*Quand un gendarme rit,*
Tous les gendarmes rient;
Voilà comment on rit,
Dans la gendarmerie."

act as luggage-porters. We were not, however, allowed to accompany our boxes and bags, but were sternly marched, preceded by the gendarme, to the police-office, where our passports were examined with a minuteness which at the present day would seem ridiculous in any country save Russia. When the *signalements*, or written descriptions of the passengers' stature, features, complexion, hair, and possible pimples, had been duly compared with the bearers of the passports themselves, the documents were not restored to us. We were asked the name of the hotel to which we intended to repair, and were informed that in due course the passports would be sent on. That meant that the *employé* of the police who brought the passports expected a fee varying between two francs and five francs for his valuable services.

The Custom House, again, was a most painful ordeal. There were at the time dozens of articles on which duties were chargeable; and the contents of all our trunks were ruthlessly dug up and scattered about during the efforts of the *douaniers* to discover whether we had any English hosiery or cutlery, any

sponges, soap, tea, mustard, pins, needles, new boots or shoes, gloves, and so forth among our belongings. This examination, again, was only the first stage of fiscal agony. There were other torture-chambers. The ladies and gentlemen passengers were ushered respectively into two apartments, the doors of which bore the inscription of "Sûreté," and were there subjected, at the hands of female and male *employés* of a most repulsive appearance, to the indignity of a rigid personal search. My dear mother, an experienced traveller, must have been a gentlewoman of a most resourceful character. She and my sister, who was four years older than myself, were thoroughly innocent of the possession of any smuggled merchandise; but to the best of my own knowledge and belief I was a compact bale of contraband goods.

Fine-thread stockings and vests; papers of pins and needles carefully packed; scissors and penknives, and all kinds of articles of English daily use, which were at the time inordinately dear in France, were artfully disposed about the different portions of my clothing, and, if I am not mistaken, I had a little sheaf of English

tooth-brushes and nail-brushes in one pocket, and a packet of Old Brown Windsor soap in the other. You see that my parent had come to France for the purpose of putting my sister and myself to school; but she intended to remain, herself, a few months in Paris to make sure that we were getting on well and were happy. By what marvellous exercise of ingenuity—and perhaps I may say assurance—my mother was able to rescue me from the attentions of the Custom House searchers I have not at the present the slightest idea. Whether she temporarily obliterated me under a heap of shawls or wraps or bribed somebody in authority not to see me I know not; but I am quite certain that I was not searched, and that before I was put to bed I was unpacked—so to speak—and the hosiery and other articles which encircled me were carefully unwound from my limbs.

I forget the name of the hotel at Boulogne whither we were at last suffered to wend our footsteps. I was so desperately fagged with the long day which I had passed at sea, and with the weary waiting at the police-office and the Custom House, that so soon as I had been care-

fully unpacked, as before mentioned, I believe that I was put to bed. I have, however, a very distinct recollection of what seemed to me the delicious flavour of the *café au lait*, the crisp-crusted bread, and especially the sweet-tasting butter, which we enjoyed at eight the next morning ere we started by the *diligence* of Messrs. Lafitte, Caillard, and Co., bound for Paris. There are still *diligences*, I apprehend, plying even in these railway days in some remote parts of Europe; still, for the benefit of home-staying readers, I may just hint that the semblance of the old Paris *diligence* was that of four distinct vehicles conjoined. In front was a chariot, accommodating three persons, and called a *coupé;* in the middle was a double-bodied coach, an unwieldy variant of our own four-horse drag, which held six travellers; and at the back was a kind of truncated omnibus, holding, I think, eight passengers, and known—not quite appropriately, since it was quadrangular in form—as the *rotonde*. My mother had chartered the *coupé* as the most comfortable, albeit most expensive, section of a normally uncomfortable machine. The three sections which I have already

enumerated were supplemented externally by what was called the *cabriolet*, the box-seat, with a large leathern hood to it like that of a hansom cab. Herein sat three more travellers and the *conducteur*, or guard, a worthy, intelligent, and civil fellow, full of wise saws and modern instances, overflowing with humorous anecdotes, ready at all times to render you any services within his power, and content at the end of the journey to accept a very moderate *pourboire* or "tip." Quite a vanished type this, I fear. I know few personages surlier, stiffer, and more disobliging than a modern French railway guard. There was no coachman. The *diligence* was drawn by four handsome, hardy, grey Picardy horses, their tails tied up with parti-coloured ribbons: the animals being bestridden by two postilions in short blue jackets with a metal badge on one sleeve, yellow waistcoats and buckskins, jack-boots with prodigious spurs, and hats covered with oilskin and also adorned with many ribbons. They were fine alert, bushy-whiskered fellows, but they swore at their horses most abominably. The harness of their steeds was mainly composed of ropes, and was almost

indescribably clumsy and uncouth. When high hills were to be ascended two extra leaders were laid on. As for the luggage, it was piled with some skill of packing on the roof of the machine; and the whole tophamper was covered with a thick tarpaulin. This, then, was the equipage which, about nine a.m., clattered from the yard of the *Diligence* Company over the then jagged pavement of the streets of Boulogne; passed through the town-gate, and issued into an amazingly dusty road; while through the clouds of dust which the wheels threw up there loomed from time to time the haggard, unclean faces and tattered figures of beggars, old and young, male and female, panting and struggling to keep pace with the *diligence* and whining a monotonous chant of "*Charité, s'il vous plaît! Petit sous Anglais! Petit morceau de biscuit Anglais!*" The French hated us quite as fiercely in 1839 as they hate us in 1894; but then, as now, they had not the slightest objection to relieving John Bull of his spare cash.

We travelled, or rather jolted, along the dusty roads till five in the afternoon. At the entrance of nearly every town and village the

beggars came forth to meet us. Beyond this there was nothing very remarkable to observe. The country through which we passed was certainly the reverse of picturesque; and the long straight lines of poplars bordering the roads seemed to my boyish eye distressingly geometrical. Where is the boy who does not hate geometry; although when he gets a little sense knocked into him he is fain to acknowledge that without systematical training in practical geometry, such as is given to every child in France, he will never acquire any tangible capacity as an artist? As it was, poplar-bordered road after poplar-bordered road, dust and beggars, beggars and dust, became in time exasperating. Was this *la belle France*, the glowing descriptions of which I had so often listened to? Little as I knew of the world, I had seen plenty of pretty rural scenery in England; and to me there could be scarcely anything more depressing and more repulsive than the French villages we passed through—the straggling, ill-paved street; the long-bodied, short-legged, turnspit-looking dogs; the gaunt pigs with famine written on their snouts and in

their blinking eyes; the old women hobbling along with twigs in their skinny hands driving the leanest of kine; the shabby cottages with high thatched roofs and casements barely glazed; the village *estaminet*, with a group of Picard boors in blue blouses, *sabots*, and striped nightcaps, crouching on a bench outside, over a plank on trestles, and swilling what seemed to be from their facial expression remarkably sour beer.

The only lively spectacle we beheld was a band of conscripts who had just drawn their "numbers," and were trudging to the head-quarters of the regiment marked on their *feuille de route*. They were in all kinds of garb, from the shabby cloth suits of the clerk and the shop assistant to the fustian of the workman and the blouse of the peasant; but they all had cockades and streamers of tricoloured ribbons in their headgear; and, if some of them looked woebegone, there was a good deal of jollity, not wholly disconnected with potations of wine and brandy, among the rest. They were trying, seemingly, to make the best of a bad job. At all events they made a great deal of noise, whooping and halloaing, and

bawling the then favourite patriotic song, "La Parisienne," the words of which were by the famous poet and dramatist, Casimir Delavigne, of whose two sons I was destined soon afterwards to be the schoolfellow; while the music was a plagiarised parody of "La Marseillaise." That magnificent national hymn was still under the taboo imposed on it after the Restoration, in 1815. At five o'clock we came to Abbeville, a dull grey town with a great deal of dead wall in the outskirts, but with a splendid cathedral in its midst. They gave us three-quarters of an hour for dinner at the Hôtel de la Poste. It was the first foreign *table d'hôte* to which I had ever sat down; and from the soup to the final cream-cheese and dessert I thought the repast magnificent. How many peaches I ate I would not relate, even if I could do so. What said the Roman historian?

Back into the exiguous *coupé;* and the lumbering old machine was on the road again. We passed a *diligence,* twin brother to our own, coming from Paris towards the coast; a few country carts and waggons, a *malle-poste* and an *estafette,* the last conveying a Government

courier with despatches, and finally a huge travelling *berline*—that is to say, a vehicle in shape resembling our *coupé*, but three times as large, on four wheels, with the coachman's box and a dickey behind. On the roof the luggage, symmetrically packed. The coachman evidently a Frenchman; the four horses as unmistakably as French as our own steeds; but the occupants of the dickey were, first, a spruce, somewhat wiry individual with closely cropped hair and clean-shaven countenance, who might have been any age between twenty and forty; whose faultlessly made frock coat, cords, top boots, and polished hat, with a cockade at the side, proclaimed him at once and indubitably an English groom.

His companion was of the softer sex, buxom, cheery, and with a mien in which the demure was always having a tussle with the saucy. An English lady's-maid, we surmised. The interior of the *berline* was occupied by a lady and gentleman. He, elderly, tall, upright, imposing. She, stout, handsome, beaming, and bejewelled. My Lord and Lady Allcash: that was certain. They were coming home from making the Grand Tour, and had started from the Hôtel des Princes,

Paris, that morning. They had come from Italy, where they had narrowly escaped capture at the hands of Fra Diavolo, and had crossed Mont Cenis into France:—no less than twelve mules having been required to drag the cumbrous but comfortable *berline* over the Alps; so, at least, my sister and I judged in our youthful imaginings. We talk a great deal nowadays, and with just complacency, about the speed of modern railway travelling, and the luxury of "*rapides*" and club-trains, and what not; but believe me, fifty years ago there was a great deal of comfort to be found in those English travelling carriages in which my Lord Allcash and her ladyship progressed at their dignified leisure all over the Continent.

It must have been four the next morning, I should say—there occurred nothing noteworthy during the night, beyond the flaring of torches and the Babel of quarrelling and objurgation every time we changed horses—when we arrived at Beauvais, another cathedral town, I fancy, and where they brought to the carriage doors capacious earthen pipkins full of fragrant *café au lait*, and hunches of bread, for us to break our fast withal.

Then to jolt and rumble again over the pulverous highway to St. Denis,—yet another cathedral town, which we reached about half-past ten. St. Denis, in the ninth year of the reign of Louis Philippe, was a pretty bustling little place not unlike Kingston, in Surrey. At the present writing it is a big, roaring, smoky, discontented, manufacturing town, with an anti-clerical mayor and an ultra-radical municipal council. After St. Denis we passed through many populous hamlets. A great effluence of all kinds of vehicles, streaming from many converging roads. Then a few pretty villas with green *jalousies*, and an objectionable number of tall stone houses, many storeys high, interspersed with wine-shops, *cafés*, timber-yards, saw-mills, boot and shoe-factories, and coopers-ages. More dust, more noise, flocks of sheep, herds of oxen; a battalion of infantry on the march; a funeral *cortége;* and then a gate, where more monkey-looking Custom House officers, close kindred to those at Boulogne, opened the carriage doors and asked us if we had anything "to declare." I do not think that we were capable of any kind of personal declaration save one to

the effect that we were very tired and very thirsty. Then we passed the gate or barrier, and sped through many narrow streets, infamously paved, with huge black gutters plashing down the sides, and with no foot pavement. To the odours of the gutter, which were not those of Araby the Blest, must be added the somewhat sickly, but not altogether unpleasant, perfume of melons and peaches, "cut" here and there by a whiff of pungent scent as that of potatoes frying. Multitudes of dogs were barking; the drums of another battalion of red-trousered soldiers on the march were making a deafening hubbub; street cries, or rather street shrieks, almost distracted you, as at high noon the *diligence* halted at the offices of Messrs. Lafitte, Caillard, and Co., in the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau, and I knew, with a feeling of exultation, that I was in PARIS.

CHAPTER V.

PARISIAN STREETS IN DAYS OF YORE.

Street Cries and Scenes—The Rue Royale—The Champs Élysées—The Parc Monceau—Schoolboy Life—A Prize Distribution—Sunday in Paris—Memories of the Reign of Terror—Concerning Whiskers and Moustachios—The Duchess of Orleans—Ups and Downs—Anglophobia in 1839—How the Author Suffered from it.

On June 28, 1667, a renowned English diarist had the honour of dining with Sir Philip and Lady Carteret, and at their table the worthy and inquisitive gentleman heard "great and good discourse of the greatness" of the then King of France, Louis XIV.; "what great things he hath done that a man may pass at any hour of the night all over that wild city of Paris with a purse in his hand and no danger; that there is not a beggar to be seen in it, nor dirt lying in it." The Carterets, as has been pointed out by Lord Braybrooke in a note in the addenda to the immortal Diary of Samuel Pepys, had evidently been hoaxing their guest; since at the period in question Paris

was notoriously unsafe, infested with robbers and beggars, and abominably unclean. These facts happened, curiously enough, to be recorded in a contemporary satirical French poem, of which I will venture to give, as tersely as I can, the English prose. "A confused heap of houses; dirt in all the streets; bridges, gates, palaces, prisons; shops well and badly furnished; many a powdered gallant with no money; many a rogue who fears the sergeant; many a swaggerer who shakes in his shoes; pages, lacqueys, beggars, and robbers by night; coaches, horses, and a tremendous uproar. Behold Paris! What think you of it?" And here we were in the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau; and I was bidden to say what I thought of Paris in 1839. To me it was simply enchanting, for all its din, its dirt, its dust, its evil odours, and its rags; and more and more to be rejoiced in did it seem as the *fiacre* which held us and our needments clattered through narrow streets into more narrow streets, crossed the Place des Victoires, and emerged at last on the Boulevard des Italiens.

The street cries, or street shrieks, which I

have already spoken of, were in themselves a source of inexhaustible pleasure. In England the new Police Act had not yet come into operation; still, the cries of London were dwindling in their number and their picturesqueness. "Sweep, O!" "Dust, ho!" "Sparrergrass!" "Milk, ho!" and "Ole clo'!" were nearly the only cries left. In Paris it appeared to be nobody's business to meddle with the itinerant shouters, bawlers, screamers, and roarers of all kinds of commodities. A red-faced man with a white wig, cocked hat, a green jerkin, and top-boots, led about leashes of dogs for sale—retrievers, spaniels, poodles, and turnspits; and this *marchand de chiens* carried, kangaroo-like, an assortment of tiny toy dogs in a big canvas pouch in front of him. Another wearer of a cocked hat was a street warbler of sentimental songs, who banged the while on a tambourine; as his wife, in a short-sleeved frock reaching to her ankles, scraped dolefully on a fiddle in accompaniment to her nasally-chanting lord. The dealer in whips was habited very much like the *diligence* postilions, and cracked his whip sonorously as he proclaimed his wares.

I suppose that itinerant whip-vendors were really called for in 1839, for never had I seen drivers thrash their horses so furiously as the French *cochers* did. Then there was a woman with a large white apron and with a basket at her back, from which pannier protruded the heads of several live geese, looking remarkably uncomfortable under the circumstances. A cadaverous, crippled creature on crutches, and with a broad-brimmed slouched hat, sold lottery tickets; a charcoal-man, much begrimed, carried his sable sack on his shoulders, as did likewise the seller of portable stoves. At the corner of one street squatted on an old piece of matting a woman who displayed specimens of wall-paper, and crooned forth from time to time, "*Tapissez vos chambres!*" and the water-carrier hawked his commodity in two buckets, attached to either end of a semi-circular yoke passing over his shoulders. An ambulatory beer-pedlar strolled from street to street in quarters where house-building was going on and artisans were potentially thirsty; and there were industrials who were retailing boxes, laths, packthread, baskets of plums and peaches, and even butter and cheese, all in the open air.

I noted, too, a fellow who had before him a square wooden tray, something like a composing "case," suspended by a strap, and in this case were ranged a number of bottles full of ink, a small keg of the indispensable fluid hanging behind him. As for the crowded boulevard, it was only a brief dream of joy; and I could just take note of the gay colours of the dresses in the crowd, the glinting of the August sun between the thickly clustering leaves of the tall old trees—long since cut down in times of civil strife—the crashing along of the omnibuses, and the hopeless muddle into which the hackney carriage-drivers seemed to be continually getting, and from which they contrived almost miraculously, so you thought, to extricate their vehicles. We passed an immense church without any windows, looking very much like a Grecian temple, but which I was told was the Madeleine. We drove down a broad, handsome, well-paved, but all too short street—the Rue Royale—which, for a reason that should at once appear clear and satisfactory to all schoolboys, was the thoroughfare which, during a lengthened sojourn in Paris, was to me, above all

thoroughfares in the French capital, the most highly-prized one. For in that same Rue Royale there was an English pastry-cook's shop, the plump and smiling proprietress of which dispensed real English plum-cake, Bath buns, three-cornered puffs, open jam tarts, and sausage rolls. Naturally, on Sundays and holidays, when I got an "*exeat*," or pass from school, I made straight for the Rue Royale.

We had one short but glorious glimpse of the Place de la Concorde, with its flashing fountains, its statuary, its newly-erected Luxor Obelisk—grey, austere, and enigmatical in 1839, on the banks of the Seine, as it had been thousands of years ago on the banks of the Nile. We could just take a peep at the distant view of the palace of the Tuileries and of the Palais Bourbon on the other side of the river—the palace being then, as now, the Chamber of Deputies. And then the *fiacre* turned to the right, and we found ourselves in the most splendid promenade I had ever yet beheld—that of the Champs Élysées. Architecturally, it was not half so splendid as the present Elysian Fields have become, thanks to the energy of Baron

Haussmann, and, it may be admitted, to the good taste of the architects of the Second Empire. There were in my boyhood few tall mansions with elaborately-decorated façades and fewer coquettish villas or stately hotels in this unequalled avenue; and, indeed, many of the shops lining the Elysian Fields in 1839 were of a comparatively humble order. The pride and joy of the place were in the motley folk who frequented it, and in the innumerable shows that were in progress. It was like a fair; and like a fair it never ceased to be from early morning till midnight—a Vanity Fair, if you will, but unsurpassed and unconquerable in its gaiety. More cries, of course; but they were the trade proclamations of people who had only something festive or frivolous to sell. Among these the *marchand de coco*, or vendor of an effervescing beverage, in the composition of which Spanish liquorice was predominant, was a conspicuous character. He, too, wore a cocked hat, and I should say that his political sympathies were slightly of a Bonapartist tendency, since his headgear was evidently modelled on the *petit chapeau* of Napoleon I.

At his back he bore a tall and profusely decorated metal cylinder, with a summit like that of a Chinese pagoda. This was the reservoir of his *coco;* and from it projected several metal taps or syphons, which passed under one arm, and from which he drew his sparkling nectar into lacquered metal goblets. He had a cross-belt, too, hung with empty goblets, in view of briskness of business.

For the rest, when many years afterwards I first made acquaintance with the "sausage" Prater at Vienna, the memory of the Champs Élysées in 1839 at once recurred to me. It was all enjoyment, all fun and frolic. Half the people seemed to have something to eat and drink to sell, and the other half were pressing forward to buy the eatables and drinkables, or gaily munching and quaffing them. Then there were Punch and Judy shows, fantoccini, dancing dogs, performing canaries, tumblers, quacks, sellers of gingerbread, macaroons, fruit, toys, cakes, cheese, and hard eggs; the brightest of colour being lent to the scene by the pretty dresses of the troops of sportive children skipping and racing about, and by the uniforms of

the military, who, to my essentially English *bourgeois* mind, seemed to be literally innumerable. I was to behold an immeasurably larger number of soldiers of all arms of the service ere the next year came to a close.

You see that these were only rapid impressions; but they were not fleeting ones, and were gradually to be enlarged and engraven abidingly on the tablets of my memory. On that particular August noon our principal business was to make our way to the apartments which had been engaged for us; and the first thing to discover was the precise locality where the apartments in question were situated. To obtain this important information we had to drive to the Parc Monceau or De Monceaux, hard by the Rue de Courcelles and the present Boulevard Malesherbes. This park is now one of the most popular of the open spaces of Paris; but in 1839 it was virtually closed to the public at large, and was in a sadly confused condition—a charming wilderness, in fact. At one period a Duke of Orleans—Philippe Égalité—had laid out a wonderful garden here, with cascades, temples, pagodas,

obelisks, kiosks, sham ruins, a windmill, and a vineyard. After the Revolution Napoleon made a present of the park and its appurtenances to Cambacérès; but the wily old Arch-Chancellor and gastronomer very soon found the gift the whitest of white elephants, and, not caring to spend the price of an indefinite number of good dinners on keeping up his Imperial Majesty's present, he respectfully returned it to Cæsar.

When I first saw it, in 1839, the estate had reverted to the Orleans family, and portions of its area were let to private tenants. Thus, in a charming little bungalow known as the Pavillon Rouge, a dear old English lady, the widow of a celebrated French harpist, resided, and it was she who had been kind enough to take rooms for us. Other villas were scattered about this curiously disorganised park; and among them there was a tiny but elegant little marble *maisonnette* inhabited by a Brazilian millionaire and three lovely brunettes, his daughters; while in yet another cottage *ornée* lived a placid old gentleman who must have been nearly eighty years of age, and who was a Major-General in the British army. Owing to some extraordinary

caprice of destiny, the placid old Major-General, who had entered the army as an ensign at sixteen, had never seen a shot fired in anger. Think of that! The date of his first commission must have been about 1776. He might have fought in the first American War; he might have campaigned with the Duke of York in the Netherlands and the North of France, with Abercrombie in Egypt, with Sir John Moore and with Wellington in the Peninsula; he might have been either at Waterloo or at New Orleans and Washington; but it had been his lot never to take part in any hostile operations against anybody. Perhaps they had put him on half-pay at a comparatively early stage of his career. Our Horse Guards did curious things sometimes in the early years of the present century.

The apartments engaged for us turned out to be in the Rue de la Pépinière, close to the Faubourg du Roule. A few days afterwards I was sent to school in the Rue de Courcelles, or, rather, to a boarding-house affiliated to the Collége Bourbon, afterwards the Lycée Bonaparte —an establishment where only outdoor pupils

were received—and my sister went to a French lady in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, who received three or four English girls for the purpose of perfecting them—"finishing," I believe, was the term then in use—in the French language and literature. Of my schoolboy life in France, as well as in England, I preserve the very pleasantest of recollections. I was exceedingly happy at school. The scholastic dietary in Paris was, as I shall have occasion to show later on, abundant and succulent, although we grumbled somewhat, as boys will do and would do if they were fed on turtle and venison, at having too much lentil soup and too many haricots. We had a great deal more liberty than is usually the lot of schoolboys in England, saving, of course, Bluecoat boys—that is to say, if we had been well-behaved during the week, we were allowed to roam about Paris from ten the next morning until seven in the evening, and in special cases the furlough was extended till ten p.m.

I arrived in Paris just in time to witness the annual distribution of prizes at the school at which I was a pupil. It was a very grand function, this

distribution of prizes. The Minister of Public Instruction attended in full official uniform, and each recipient of a prize when he ascended the platform had the honour of being kissed on both cheeks by his Excellency, who proceeded to place a laurel crown on the brow of the fortunate youth, who, as he descended to his seat among his schoolfellows, was saluted by the fanfares of a brass band. Prior to the prize-giving there was a theatrical performance on a stage neatly fitted up with a proscenium and scenery for the purpose, the different parts of the play being performed by the elder students, the female characters being impersonated by the best-looking boys. The play in 1839 was that very old farce, *Le Sourd; ou l'Auberge pleine.* Naturally, as I had not done anything to win a prize, no laurel crown graced my brow; but at the examination of the following year I was more fortunate. I obtained a prize for Greek, which was very systematically and lucidly taught from the admirable grammar of Burnouf, the first French philologer who discarded the defective and dismal verb τύπτω from the table of Greek conjugations, and substituted

for it the merry and comprehensive verb λύω. I also took a prize for history and another for geography: the test of proficiency in the latter being the modelling in clay of a map of South America—the altitude of the mountains being represented to scale, and the rivers and surrounding border of sea simulated by means of pieces of plate-glass artfully embedded in the clay. Possibly this very early instruction in physical geography gave me a taste for travelling; or perhaps I was predestined to be a wanderer on the face of the earth. *Sait-on où l'on ira?* My Sundays were very felicitous ones. So long as my parent remained in Paris my sister and I used to pass the Sabbath with her in the Rue de la Pépinière, the house being a very select little *pension*.

Of the ladies and gentlemen who used to meet at dinner—and a very sociable and sprightly repast it was—I can only recollect two. One was a bald-headed patriarch, tall and gaunt, marble-like in the pallor of his countenance, who always wore a black velvet skull-cap. In virtue of his great age and the fact that he was eminent in the world of science, his appearance

at table in a long dressing-gown of uncertain tint was tacitly tolerated. He had lived through all the terrible episodes of the First Revolution, and had occupied during the Reign of Terror an apartment in the Rue St. Honoré, next door but one to the house in which Maximilian Robespierre resided, and where, strange to remember, that man of blood was idolised by his landlord and landlady and their family. I was a very inquisitive boy; and over and over again did I pester the gaunt old gentleman to tell me something about Robespierre, Danton, and Marat—about Marie Antoinette and the Princess de Lamballe; but all that I could extract from him was to the effect that at the period of which I was so anxious to learn something he was very much pre-occupied in the study of conchology. Confound his conchology! But there was an old lady in that small *pension* who was always ready to tell me stories of the Terror. She was a Marquise, with beautiful white hair like spun glass, and a rosy, pippin-like face. Her husband and her two brothers had been guillotined, and she herself had lain long in gaol, waiting for that death on the

scaffold from which she was rescued by the fall of Robespierre. She complained of nothing —neither of her many bereavements nor of the confiscation of her husband's estate, nor of the genteel indigence in which she was passing the evening of her life. She would only say, shrugging her good old shoulders, covered with a pelerine of black lace, that "*les temps étaient durs.*" They had been hard enough to her, with a vengeance.

Let me see. What kind of a Paris was it that I wandered about on Sundays and holidays? A very different one, I trow, from that which I ramble about sometimes at Eastertide when I can snatch a brief holiday. So far as the gentlemen were concerned, it was a whiskered and a moustached, but, except in the artists' quarter, not a bearded Paris in 1839. Moustaches had supplemented whiskers shortly after the Revolution of July, 1830; prior to which upheaval whiskers, even among civilians, had been looked at askance as facial adornments implying something like advanced Liberal opinions on the part of the wearers. Strict Legitimists, thoroughgoing adherents of the

Drapeau Blanc and of the Most Christian King of France and Navarre, went usually clean-shaven. King Louis Philippe was a whiskered monarch; but his sons, Orléans, Nemours, and Aumale, being soldiers, were privileged to assume moustaches. The Prince de Joinville ventured on a short beard, which was altogether contrary to the practice of that naval service of which he was at the time an ornament. As for the youngest son of Louis Philippe, the Duc de Montpensier, he was in 1839 a stripling who had not left college. I remember to have seen him with his tutor at Franconi's Circus in the Champs Élysées.

Again, I preserve a distinct remembrance of an open landau drawn by four horses, the postilions in the Royal livery of blue and silver, halting at a jeweller's shop in the Rue de la Paix. It was in the spring of 1840 that two handsomely dressed ladies in the pretty little cottage bonnets, and wearing those bunches of side ringlets which used to be known as "Henrietta Marias," but which in irreverent England went by the name of "Blenheim spaniels," alighted from the carriage and entered the shop; the remaining

occupants of the landau being a comely female in somewhat gay and picturesque attire, who wore an immensely tall *cauchoise* or cap, such as that donned by Norman peasant women, and which was brave with ribbons. In her lap reposed a greatly glorified baby. I can see now clearly in the mirror of my memory a plump little pink face and two little pudgy hands visible in the midst of a very billow, so to speak, of rich lace. The first lady who entered the jeweller's shop was the Duchesse D'Orléans, the consort of the Heir-Apparent to the Throne. Her attendant was a lady-in-waiting. The comely female in the *cauchoise* was, I concluded, a nurse; and the little pink baby enveloped in Valenciennes and Brussels lace was the Comte de Paris. The ladies returned, with much bowing and scraping on the part of the shopkeeper and his assistants; grooms jumped down to open the doors, and off went the sumptuous equipage, escorted by a troop of shining Cuirassiers.

A world of strange ups and downs! Sixteen years afterwards, strolling down the Rue de Rivoli, I saw dashing past towards the Tuileries an open carriage with four superb horses ridden

by postilions, not in a Royal livery, but in the Imperial livery, one of green and gold. At a fast trot behind came an escort of Cuirassiers, as glittering as those I had seen in 1839 in the Rue de la Paix; only the accoutrements of the warriors of 1856 bore the effigy of the Imperial Eagle. There was a baby also in that carriage; but he and his nurse and a *sous-gouvernante* were the only occupants of the landau. Another little pink face; again two little pudgy hands, and again a surrounding wave of Valenciennes and Brussels lace. Baby the Second was Louis Eugène Jean Joseph Napoléon, commonly known as the Prince Imperial. Him I have lived to see laid to earth in the Roman Catholic Chapel at Chislehurst.

Frenchmen in 1839 were, perhaps, a little more furious, politically speaking, against England than they are at the present time, nor did I, mere boy as I was, escape a good deal of unpleasantness at school owing to the circumstance of my being a British subject. It was surely not my fault that Blücher, instead of Grouchy, had come up at a critical moment at Waterloo. It was not my fault that after

the Emperor Napoleon had surrendered to Captain Maitland on board the *Bellerophon*, and had arrived at Plymouth, the British Government determined to send the Conqueror and Captive of the Earth to St. Helena; and I had obviously nothing to do with the refusal of Sir Hudson Lowe to allow his prisoner and his suite more than a solitary bottle of champagne per diem. The unsatisfactory drainage of Longwood House, the plenitude of rats in the dining-room, the bad quality of the beef, and the neglect of the authorities at home to send any newspapers to St. Helena beyond those in the columns of which the unfortunate exile was virulently abused, were clearly matters for which I should not have been held in the slightest degree responsible. Yet the remembrance of circumstances evidently beyond my control led to my having my hair pulled, my ears tweaked, my toes trodden upon half-a-dozen times a week by my schoolfellows, who sometimes went so far as to insinuate that I was a relative of 'Sir Ougson," and who frequently bestowed upon me such hard names as "Pomme de terre" and "Goddam." Well; did not Joan of Arc habitu-

ally speak of the English in France as "God-dams"? Perhaps I had no cause to complain when I only had applied to me such a sobriquet as the heroic Maid of Orleans had bestowed upon her English foes more than four hundred years ago. Still, it was the reverse of gratifying to be snubbed, filliped, tweaked, pinched, and otherwise maltreated in consequence of the behaviour towards Napoleon of Marshal Grouchy, Admiral Sir George Cockburn, and General Sir Hudson Lowe.

CHAPTER VI.

A MOST FAMOUS FUNERAL.

A Holiday at School—Sundry Excursions—Learning to Swim—A Fellow-Prisoner—The Trial of Madame Laffarge—Funeral of Marshal Macdonald—Louis Napoleon's Invasion of Boulogne—His After-Career—Revival of Imperialist Sentiment—Louis Philippe's Miscalculation—The Second Funeral of the Great Napoleon.

Not easily, if, indeed, ever, will be effaced from my memory the year 1840, which, with the exception of a few days preceding Christmas, when we were at Dover, was passed in Paris. I had been getting on famously with my books during the past fifteen or eighteen months—so well, indeed, that, the books being French and Latin and Greek ones, and my mother and sister having returned to England, I was left a solitary Briton among a mob of boys to whom the language of John Bull was unknown; and the natural consequence was that I had forgotten the better part of my own English, and had, when I came home again, to be sent to an English school to acquire some acquaintance with my mother tongue.

I have another reason for remembering 1840, owing to the fact that, my kindred being absent, I spent the August vacation at college, or, rather, at the *pension* in the Rue de Courcelles affiliated thereto. I scarcely think that a boy or girl who has had the misfortune to pass his or her holidays at school will ever forget that dolorous experience. With leaden monotony the days and weeks drag away. Home-sickness robs you of appetite. You think with infinite bitterness of the pleasures which are being enjoyed without stint by those who were your class-fellows in term-time. You would give anything—say, all of your pocket-money, or a rabbit, or two guinea-pigs, or a team of white mice—for the clamour and bustle of the class-room and the playground. You even miss and regret the continual scoldings and threats of the professors and the ushers. You have too much freedom; and yet you feel as though you were wandering about a great empty gaol. You have too much playtime; and yet you feel wearier of doing nothing than you did of grinding through lessons for eight hours a day—which was the intellectual

pabulum of French schoolboys in the year 1840.

There were, however, a few consolations in this period of youthful sorrow. I was no longer permitted to go out alone, since I had no parents or relations in Paris; but now and again a good-natured mathematical master, who was *locum tenens* for the head of the *pension*, or *marchand de soupe*, as we used irreverently to call him, used to take a fellow-prisoner and myself out for a walk into the gay city. Of those jaunts I have a delightful remembrance. Sometimes the excellent expositor of geometric problems would conduct us to a Boulevard café and regale us with a *bavaroise* or a *mazagran*, or even a cherry-brandy. One evening, it being the balmiest of late summer-time, he escorted us to a "café-concert" in the Champs Élysées; and it has often struck me that the lady vocalists at those same alfresco concerts fifty-four years ago had precisely the same shrilly strident or nasally droning voices, the same tricks of ogling and leering and shrugging their lean shoulders, and the same way of wriggling their skirts, as their successors

have in the music-halls of the present day. The costume altogether has changed; but the intonation, the tricks, and the manners remain.

There was also the bi-weekly early morning excursion to the École de Natation, or public swimming baths, on the banks of the Seine: this being, I should explain, an expedition which we regularly made twice a week during the spring, the summer, and the early autumn in term-time. It was always a festive journey; the platform surrounding the huge swimming-bath being provided with a number of little stalls, at which such delicacies as tiny loaves of brown bread, unsurpassed in their crisp crustiness, Lyons sausage, Gruyère cheese, and hard eggs boiled in cochineal to a bright crimson hue were sold. For fifty *centimes* you could enjoy quite a little banquet. The bolder spirits among us would even spy out secret corners where we could puff at a *petit Bordeaux*, or halfpenny cigar. Smoking, it is true, usually made us desperately sick; but when we recovered from the nausea of the weed we felt quite old boys, and correspondingly proud. Who, being young, does not yearn to be grown up; and, when he is old, does not

wish that he could be young again? At the École de Natation I learned to swim; the earlier processes of natation being taught on dry land—that is to say, a broad elastic belt was passed round your waist by hooks and straps, attached to a ring in which you were suspended from a wooden frame unpleasantly like a gallows, and the swimming instructor then put you through the elementary passes and strokes. They say that people who have once learned to swim never lose the faculty of keeping their heads above water when they are out of their depth. I cannot speak in this regard from recollection, because, although I have had experience of all kinds of baths all over the world, I have never tried to swim since the days when Louis Philippe was King.

That fellow-prisoner at large, to whom I made allusion just now, was an Italian boy from Milan, a little my senior, and boiling over with Italian patriotism, as it was then understood. His father was, in fact, a Carbonaro of noble rank and democratic opinions, had been long a convict captive in chains in the Austrian prison of the Spielberg; and my schoolfellow's head was full of Silvio Pellico and his wonderful

book, "Le Mie Prigioni." I met my youthful Italian friend many years afterwards at Florence. He was Count Qualcheduno, covered with orders and occupying an exalted position at the Court of the Grand Duke of Tuscany—the *last* one—and he was a very staunch Conservative, *Codino* and *Papalino*. So times change, and we change with them.

There was plenty to talk about during that August vacation in 1840. The trial of Madame Laffarge for the murder of her husband by poisoning him with arsenic was the topic of all Paris; and day after day we used greedily to devour the contents of the *Journal des Tribunaux;* read the speeches of the prosecution and the defence; comment upon the evidence, and speculate on the guilt or innocence of the accused woman. If I remember aright, the general consensus of opinion in our small circle—including the mathematical master, the wife of the keeper of the *pension*, the *concierge* and ourselves—was that Madame Laffarge did not poison her spouse, and that Laffarge himself was a confirmed arsenic-eater, who had taken an overdose of his favourite stimulant.

But now came, with the return of the boys to school, a new and superbly stirring feeling of expectation in the shape of a grand military funeral, which we were permitted to witness. I had, with two or three comrades, a whole day's pass to see the funeral *cortége* of Étienne Jacques Macdonald, Marshal of France and Duke of Tarentum: a valiant veteran of the Napoleonic wars who had lived in retirement since 1830, and was at the time of his death, I should say, nearly eighty years of age. Louis Philippe had no Garde Royale: a corps of Household troops being deemed too suggestive of despotic rule for a Citizen-King; but there was a very splendid contingent of the Municipal Guards in the pageant, the Chasseurs d'Afrique likewise made the bravest of shows; and, besides, every arm in the service was represented, including whole batteries of artillery. Strangely enough, I preserve not the slightest memory of the funeral car itself. Its image is completely obliterated from my mind; and the reason for this evanishment of a thing surely worth recollecting may be due to the circumstance that I had, on December Fourteenth following, the

opportunity of seeing another and a far more interesting funeral chariot, which was as Aaron's rod and swallowed up the impressions of all previous and possible funeral cars altogether.

But before the most famous of all funerals that I have ever witnessed took place, Paris was to be slightly excited by a half-melodramatic and half-burlesque incident, which occurred at the pleasant seaside town of Boulogne-sur-Mer. In July, 1840, an adventurous young prince of the Bonaparte family, Louis Napoleon by Christian name, the son of Louis, King of Holland, and the beautiful Hortense Beauharnais, and who had been leading the life of a fashionable man about town in London—being considered by the majority of society as either a simpleton or a semi-lunatic—chartered a steamer called the *Edinburgh Castle*. On August Fourth he and a chosen band of conspirators of the shadiest antecedents, with a curious selection of costumes and "properties" to be used for insurgent purposes, embarked on board the *Edinburgh Castle* in the Port of London. Steam was got up at five in the morning, and at four a.m. the next day this "Ship of Fools," as some called her,

arrived off Wimereux, about a league from Boulogne.

The Prince had brought with him a tame eagle trained to fly in circles above his head; and the story ran that the bird of Jove had been incited to alight on the Prince's head by a piece of bacon artfully placed on the crown of his hat. On landing, Louis Napoleon and his companions, who were dressed in sham French uniforms, were met and welcomed by a disaffected French lieutenant and three confederates. The filibusters from the *Edinburgh Castle* had scarcely set foot on shore when a numerous contingent of Custom House officers came up; and these worthy *douaniers* seemed rather puzzled to know whether the gentlemen who had just landed were smugglers or shipwrecked folk. The Bonapartists were, however, numerous enough to surround and overcome the Custom House officers; and the motley band straggled through the streets of Boulogne to the barracks of the regiment of infantry in garrison. The disaffected lieutenant caused the "Assembly" to be sounded; paraded the regiment; announced that King Louis Philippe had ceased to reign,

and exhorted them to acclaim the Nephew of the Emperor. The conspirators set up a shout of "*Vive l'Empereur;*" and the men were actually on the point of yielding to the bewitchment of Bonapartism, when their officers, who habitually slept out of barracks, came up. There was a confused brawl, and an intrepid Orleanist captain, named Col-Puygellier, struggling with the Prince to eject him from the barrack-yard, was fired upon by the desperate adventurer. The pistol missed its aim; and an inoffensive Grenadier received the Bonapartist bullet in the face.

Eventually Louis Napoleon and fifty-three of his adherents were captured, and sent under a strong guard to Paris. The remainder of the affair is too familiarly historical to need recapitulation. It is sufficient to say that in October, 1840, the Prince was tried before the Chamber of Peers, and was defended by the illustrious advocate M. Berryer. Louis Napoleon was found guilty, and sentenced to imprisonment for life in the fortress of Ham, whence, as we all know, he escaped a few years afterwards in the disguise of a workman, to become, in 1848, President of the French

Republic; to betray and annihilate that Republic in 1851; to be elected Emperor of the French in 1852; to be vanquished by the Germans at Sedan in 1870; to be deposed by the nation over whom he had ruled for eighteen years; and to die, in 1873, at Camden House, Chislehurst.

It is as strange as it is true that Paris in the autumn of 1840 troubled itself far more about the trial of Madame Laffarge than it did about Prince Louis Napoleon and his madcap Boulogne expedition. The entire escapade had not lasted more than a couple of hours; scarcely any blood had been shed; and the attempt at insurrection had collapsed in an undeniably absurd manner. The Parisians, moreover, knew scarcely anything of Louis Napoleon, personally. They had only vaguely heard of him as a hare-brained young man who in 1836 had attempted an insurrectionary *coup de main* at Strasburg, and who, ignominiously failing therein, had been packed off to the United States by the imprudently lenient government of Louis Philippe. Louis Napoleon did not represent to the French mind of that period anything of the picturesque side of the Napoleonic legend; and in the portraits

of him which were circulated there was depicted only a dull, lethargic, unsympathetic face, with an exaggerated aquiline nose, half-closed eyes, and a heavy moustache. Again, the newspapers continually hinted, and sometimes declared outright, that Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was indeed the son of Hortense, but that Louis King of Holland was not his father; the dubious honour of his paternity being ascribed to a Dutch admiral named Verhuel.

Thus, the Boulogne escapade and its chief actor were forgotten almost before the gates of the citadel of Ham had closed on the Quixotic young gentleman with the aquiline nose, the drowsy eyes, and the heavy moustache. But now take heed of the astounding inconstancy and capriciousness of mankind. Louis Napoleon lay, for some time after his trial, in the palace-prison of the Luxembourg; and there he might have lain for months without either the press or the public taking much notice of him; yet, while he was treated with indifference almost amounting to contempt, France in general and Paris in particular had gone stark staring mad about the Emperor Napoleon I. We schoolboys,

with the exception of Alexandre Dumas the Younger, whose father was high in favour at Court, and was the friend and associate of the Orleans princes, were either red-hot Bonapartists or equally fervid Legitimists. But the Imperialists, I fancy, far out-numbered the "Carlists," as the partisans of the exiled Charles X. were then somewhat confusingly called, since there was another faction of Carlists in Spain, the adherents of Don Carlos de Borbon.

Everywhere, when we took our walks abroad, we found something to remind us of the Great Conqueror who died a prisoner at Longwood. If you had a twopenny gamble for macaroons at a bagatelle board in the Champs Élysées, the prize was often a little china bust or a picture of the Emperor. If you tried your luck at a rifle gallery, and managed to hit the bull's-eye, a miniature leaden effigy of the Emperor in his great-coat and his little cocked hat started up above the target to proclaim your victory. Napoleonic cups and saucers, bronze medals, and "charms" for watch-chains abounded in every shop on the Boulevards; while in the Rue de Rivoli the print-sellers displayed engravings

of Napoleon at the bivouac the night before Austerlitz; of Horace Vernet's Napoleon arising from the grave; of the Abdication at Fontainebleau; of the Return from Elba and the Flight from Waterloo. Horace Vernet himself, in the sumptuous illustrations which he drew for the Life of the Emperor written by M. Laurent de l'Ardêche, materially helped to fan the flame of the Napoleonic fever; and this great artist was ably seconded by three other painters and book illustrators of renown—Raffet, Charlet, and Hippolyte Bellangé, all flaming Bonapartists; while Napoleonism was still further glorified in the poetry of Béranger. This strange revival of Imperialist sentiment in France was the result of the infinitely cunning and tortuous policy of Louis Philippe, who, in the end, only succeeded in overreaching himself, and in opening and paving the road for a Napoleonic restoration.

This able, shrewd, but inveterately double-dealing old gentleman aspired to be hailed by his subjects and by posterity as the "Napoleon of Peace"; in fact, he discounted and exploited the glories of the First Empire for the benefit

of his own dynasty. He had scarcely seated himself on the throne when he sanctioned the re-erection of the statue of Napoleon on the summit of the column in the Place Vendôme, from which it had been deposed during the Restoration. Two years afterwards an effigy of the Emperor was placed in the courtyard of the Hôtel des Invalides; and in the same year the Court of Cassation were allowed to place in their Council Chamber a stately portrait of the modern Justinian in the act of presenting the Code Napoléon to the nation. Finally, on May Fifth, 1840, the anniversary of Napoleon's death, M. Guizot, Ambassador of France at the Court of St. James's, made an official application to the British Government for the restoration of the ashes of Napoleon to France. The Government of Queen Victoria promptly and cheerfully acquiesced in the demand: Lord Palmerston, then Foreign Secretary, taking occasion to express a hope to M. Thiers, at the time Prime Minister of France, that if any hostile feelings yet lingered between the two nations, those feelings might be buried in the tomb about to receive the ashes of the Emperor. This was

the first occasion upon which England had officially recognised the Imperial title. At this distance of time such a persistent exploitation of Cæsarism on the part of a constitutional monarch might appear as little short of political insanity; but Louis Philippe felt himself perfectly secure on the French throne, and imagined that all the lustre which he was casting on the Imperial *régime* would be refracted on his own person and family.

The only son of Napoleon, born King of Rome and metamorphosed by his grandfather, the Emperor Francis, into an Austrian Duke of Reichstadt, had died, worn out by fatigue and excess, at Vienne, in 1832. Had he lived he would have been a really formidable rival to the Orleans dynasty; but when the body of the poor young heir to so much glory and so much misfortune had been consigned to the tomb in the Church of the Capuchins, a sigh of relief must have moved the breast of crafty old Louis Philippe. From the surviving brothers of Napoleon he had nothing whatever to fear, and it is quite probable that he regarded his prisoner, Louis Napoleon, as a

half-demented visionary, utterly devoid of any practical capacity.

Now you will understand why we boys had a whole holiday on December Fourteenth, 1840. On that day, at noon, the body of Napoleon I. was timed to arrive in Paris. It was a bitterly cold morning, rather misty, but illumined now and again by a gleam of sunshine; and the group of schoolboys of which I made one reached the Champs Élysées about a quarter to eight. Even at that hour the crowd was immense; and by nine o'clock it had attained such tremendous proportions that for mere safety's sake, as well as with the hope of getting a good view of the procession, two of us thought that the best plan to adopt was to climb one of the leafless trees, and ensconce ourselves on a sufficiently stout branch thereof. This we presently did, and were soon after furiously commanded to come down by a vigilant *sergent de ville;* but we paid no attention to his orders or to his menaces; and the crowd growing bigger and more difficult of management, he very sensibly desisted from the endeavour to remove us; and we were left during the remainder of the forenoon quite unmolested.

As it chanced, nearly all the trees were full that morning of human fruit, and the police would have had a desperately hard task before them had they tried to dislodge even a tithe of the tree-climbers. The story of the Second Funeral of Napoleon has been so often and so exhaustively narrated, and has been, moreover, so graphically described by Mr. Thackeray, that it would be impertinent as well as useless to give it again in detail. But the only point which I wish to dwell upon with regard to this most famous funeral is in connection with the funeral car. I can remember every feature in that sumptuous equipage; and were my fingers as lissom as they used to be, I think that I could draw the car now with tolerable accuracy; but I have to admit that when I saw it on the Fifteenth of December aforesaid I fell into an error touching the object which crowned the structure—an error shared by, I have not the slightest doubt, many thousands of the spectators of the pageant.

The car was composed of five distinct parts —basement, pedestal, caryatides, shield, and (as we thought) a coffin on the summit. The

basement rested on four massive gilt wheels, and from the platform rose groups of cherubs seven feet high, the structure ending in a huge oval shield. The whole car was a mass of frosted and burnished gold, just slightly veiled by draperies of transparent purple crape, powdered with the golden Imperial bees. It was this transparent veil, and perhaps the mistiness of the morning, which induced the mistake of which I and so many more were the victims. That which appeared to be the coffin was at an altitude of fifty feet from the ground; and as the car slowly progressed along the Champs Élysées towards the Place de la Concorde, the rumour ran like wildfire through the dense crowd that on the lid of the coffin lay the cloak of Marengo, the sword of Austerlitz, and the little cocked hat of Jena. I could have almost sworn that I could descry those objects; but, alas! I had afterwards cause once more to remember the strange conflict of evidence about the brawl between the warder and the citizen on Tower-green—a brawl of which Sir Walter Raleigh, the Lieutenant of the Tower, and the Lieutenant's wife had all been eye-witnesses,

and of the episodes of which they all three gave diametrically contradictory versions. Only recently, reading the official account of the Second Funeral of Napoleon, I found it stated that the catafalque of the car was surmounted, not by a coffin containing the remains, but by a cenotaph, an exact copy of the real coffin, on the lid of which lay, upon a purple velvet cushion, the Imperial sceptre, the Sword of Justice, and a simulation of the Imperial crown in gold and embellished with imitation jewels. The real coffin, with the real bones of Napoleon, were deposited in the interior of the car, whence it could be easily removed and carried into the church by the *employés* of the Pompes Funèbres. Obviously, had the object at the top been the actual coffin and not a cenotaph, it would have had to be lowered by means of a crane—a procedure which, to say the least, would have been slightly indecorous.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE RAIL.

A Railway Book of 1839—Primitive Signalling—"A kind of Telegraph System" Suggested—The London and Brighton Line—A Semaphore in Whitehall—The Great Railway Mania—A Lucrative Commission — Railway Carriages in 1845 — No Smoking Compartments—How the Crystal Palace was Born.

In the year 1839, when I was travelling from Boulogne to Paris, by the cumbrous old *diligence*, there was published in London a little octavo volume called "Roads, Railways, and Vehicles." I picked up the book recently at Brighton, and read it with lively interest. It is true that not much more than forty of its pages are devoted to the railways in existence in England in the year above-mentioned; still the descriptions given of trains, stations, day and night signals, telegraphs, and railway economy generally, are in the highest degree amusing and not altogether uninstructive, even at this advanced time of day. For example, touching signals, alarms, and telegraphs, the anonymous writer states that there is "a police force employed

along the line of railway, whose duty is to keep a watch over everything occurring, or likely to occur, along the line; to prevent intruders from climbing over the palisades; to see that no stones are thrown or suffered to fall on the rails, and to render assistance to passing trains in case of any accident happening." There may be timid travellers at the present time who would joyfully approve of the organisation of such a railway police as seems to have existed more than fifty years since; especially as regards the mischievous young varlets who divert themselves by hanging over the parapets of bridges and dropping stones on the line or shooting catapults at passing trains.

The duties of the railway policemen as signalmen, in 1839, are also graphically described: "On some of the railways," I read, "it has been customary, when a train is approaching the spot where a policeman stands, for him to place himself in a conspicuous situation, with one or both arms extended in a certain or understood manner. One position of the arms is to signify 'all right,' and that the train may proceed without fear

of interruptions; while another position implies that for some reason or other matters are going wrong, and that the train must stop when it approaches the constable. In other instances the railway policeman is provided with little flags of different colours, and on the approach of a train he holds up one or other of the flags, according to the intimation which he wishes to convey: for instance, a red flag is used to intimate danger, and a green one as a signal that all is right."

The writer of "Roads and Railways" adds that it has been suggested to institute "a kind of telegraph system" on railways, "which would not only be advantageous for the operations of the companies, but might likewise be made the means of communicating messages at so much per word. It is proposed," he writes, "to erect a semaphore at each station, and adopt such a code of telegraphic language as shall be 'visible' at the next adjoining station; and it has been calculated that a communication, consisting of one single signal, might be conveyed a hundred miles in a minute and a quarter, and a message of some length,

requiring several distinct signals, might be conveyed the same distance in half an hour." Such were the innocently small beginnings of our present colossal system of signalling and of telegraphic communication.

It is worthy of note that in 1837 the Magnetic Needle Telegraph was patented by William F. Cooke and Charles Wheatstone; that in 1839–40 Mr. Cooke set up the Electric Telegraph line, on the Great Western Railway, from Paddington to West Drayton, and also on the Blackwall line and in Glasgow; and that in 1841 Wheatstone's Alphabetical Telegraph was patented. Two or three years later the infamous Tawell, expelled Quaker and murderer, was apprehended through the agency of the electric telegraph. In dismissing the little book to which allusion has been made, I may remark that, to me, perhaps the most entertaining statement which it contains is that, among the railways then in course of construction, "the London and Brighton line has been distinguished, and unfortunately distinguished, from all others, by the ruinous expense incurred, without the slightest progress having been made in the actual construction of

the railway; this delay being due to four or five competing companies besieging the Legislature all at once for Acts of Parliament." "As it will be several years," concludes the writer, "before the railway can exist between London and Brighton, we will not enter into details respecting the Parliamentary decision on the subject of that line." As a matter of fact, the writer of "Roads and Railways" was a somewhat hasty prophet of evil. Ground was first broken on the London and Brighton line, at the deepest part of the great cutting on the north of Merstham Tunnel, on July 14th, 1838. In July, 1841, the line was opened from London as far as Hayward's Heath: the passengers being conveyed the intermediate distance to and from Brighton by coach; and by the middle of September of the same year the whole line was completed between London Bridge and Brighton.

The early time-tables mentioned only five trains per diem between the metropolis and London-super-Mare, and the last of these trains started at a quarter to five in the afternoon. The express trains covered the fifty-two miles in an hour and forty-five minutes; the ordinary

first-class trains took two hours, and the mixed trains two hours and a half. The fares were 14s. 6d. in the first-class, and 9s. 6d. in the second.

I may be excused for having in a preceding paragraph said something touching railway signals prior to the introduction of the electric telegraph; I did so for the reason that I have a lively recollection of the old semaphore which used to stand on the roof of the Admiralty at Whitehall; and over and over again have I puzzled my young brains as to what the cumbrous machine, with its wide waving arms, was signalling down to Plymouth or Portsmouth. In those days, too, the courtyard of the Admiralty had a new-fangled patent pavement, in the pounded flints of which there was a considerable admixture of indiarubber; and it was an infinite boyish delight to exchange the hard stones of the pavement in Whitehall for the comparatively elastic and springy indiarubber area in the Admiralty courtyard. It turned out a failure, I suppose, and was removed—I forget when. Again, I may hint that the reason why I selected the London and Brighton line as one of the texts of

this chapter was that it happened to be the first railroad on which I ever travelled.

From my very earliest childhood we spent at least six months of the year at Brighton, and I retain the pleasantest of reminiscences of the stage coaches in which I travelled to and from town between 1833 and 1839. My mother's favourite coach was the Age, a model vehicle, splendidly horsed, which used to start from Castle Square, Brighton. It was driven by Sir Vincent Cotton, a sporting baronet, who had suffered much from the infirmity of "shaking his elbow" at Crockford's and other gay and festive resorts at the West End of London, where the ailment of oscillating elbows was then extremely prevalent. Sir Vincent looked very sharply after the half-crowns which it was customary to present to the driver as gratuities; and there was a story current that he once had an animated parley with two ancient maiden ladies who objected, with much tossing of their heads, to hand over the customary coin, protesting that "they had known the coachman's mother, and that he ought to be ashamed to ask for a fee." Whereupon the hardened baronet

replied "that if his mamma or his great-grandmamma had ever patronised his coach, he should most assuredly have expected the usual tip."

But I must quit the fascinating subject of coaches and coachmen; my business for the nonce being clearly the Rail and not the Road. It was precisely in the late autumn of the year 1845 that I made my first journey from London Bridge to Brighton, my fellow-travellers in a second-class carriage being my mother and sister and the lessee and manager of the Princess's Theatre, Oxford Street, Mr. John Medex Maddox. Unless I am mistaken, it was indirectly due to that journey that I owed my subsequent engagement by Mr. Maddox at the Princess's, where, for some eighteen months, I fulfilled, I should say, almost every possible duty that can be performed in a theatre, with the single exception of acting on its boards. Whether I was endowed with, or could by study and practice have acquired the histrionic faculty, I do not know; but it is certain that of the slightest inclination for the actor's art I have always been wholly and entirely destitute.

The year 1845 will always be a memorable

one to me, from an "On the Rail" point of view; for the reason that it so fell out that in the year aforesaid I earned, in the course of twenty-four hours, more money than up to my twenty-fifth year I ever made in the course of an entire month. It was the year of the great railway mania. By a certain hour on a certain afternoon all the maps and sections of the almost innumerable lines which had been projected had to be deposited at the offices of the Board of Trade, in Whitehall; and in a great number of instances these maps and plans were executed by means of lithography. I could draw pretty well on stone, both with chalk and in pen and ink, and I had the good luck to be engaged by a City firm to help to finish a large number of railway maps and plans. It was desperately hard work. I suppose that I had at least twenty fellow-workers in a big room, where there was a huge table laden with lithographic stones. We were paid according to capacity and quantity of work done, and I think I received fifteen shillings an hour; and we worked, worked, worked, throughout the day, during most part of the night,

and during the greater portion of the succeeding day. I got through my labours as conscientiously as I could; but if it unfortunately chanced that, in tracing the course of a line from London to Penzance, my errant lithographic pen wandered from Crewe to Teheran, thence to Lima, and so, by way of Exeter to Blackwall, and then down again by Dover to Plymouth, taking in Nijni Novgorod by the way, all I can urge in extenuation for my deviations is, that so many thousand parallel, angular, and circular lines were required, together with the names of so many counties, towns, and villages; and the entire work had to be finished within a given time. Unfortunately I was never again honoured during my youth with a similarly lucrative commission.

The second-class carriages on the London and Brighton line in 1845 were entirely innocent of upholstery. They were simply bare wooden boxes, with bare wooden seats; but the floor, I believe, was covered with some kind of matting, and the windows were glazed. Even this accommodation might be deemed luxurious, when it was compared with that provided on some other railways; since I remember about 1843 to have

seen a train on the Great Western Railway, the second-class carriages of which had windows destitute of glass: the deficiency being supplied by thick curtains of leather. As regards the third-class carriages, I made no acquaintance with them on the London and Brighton line; but about 1847 I travelled from London to Liverpool by that which was then known as a "Parliamentary" train, familiarly "Parly:" the Legislature in its wisdom and beneficence having insisted that at least once a day there should be a train for the conveyance of third-class travellers at a fare not exceeding one penny a mile.

No notice, however slight, of the early days of railways would be even approximatively complete without mention of the horrible discomfort experienced by all classes of railway travellers. The first-class compartments were exiguous and stuffy; the second-class were grim, hard, and distinct enemies to sleep; while the third-class carriages, or rather pens, certainly did not exceed in comfort the facilities afforded by the trucks in which cattle, sheep, and pigs were conveyed. The "Parly," I believe,

however, was compulsorily provided with a roof.

There were no smoking-carriages, and indeed smoking, under any circumstances, was strictly prohibited in a long list of bye-laws which were hung up on the platform of every terminus, and which purported to be approved by the Railway Commissioners, two of whom were, if I remember aright, Edwin Chadwick, C.B., and Sir Edward Ryan. This absurd prohibition led, of course, to systematic evasions of the bye-laws. A first or second class traveller in a compartment in which there were no ladies could always smoke with impunity, if he administered a sop to Cerberus: that is to say, if he fee'd the guard. And looking at the many half-crowns and shillings with which I have parted, in order to be able to enjoy a cigar without official interference, I can scarcely withhold some slight sympathy from the railway guards, whose supplementary emoluments have been so cruelly abridged by the introduction of smoking-carriages.

A surreptitious railway cigar plays a little part in the history of the Great Exhibition. Charles Dickens was never tired of telling a

story in which the chief actors were Joseph Paxton, King of Gardeners, and Robert Stephenson, the illustrious engineer. Paxton in 1850 was on the board of directors of a railway company, and had been attending a meeting at Derby. There was a great talk at the time about the competition for designs for the Exhibition buildings in Hyde Park, and in the interval of business Paxton sketched on a piece of blotting-paper his first idea of an Exhibition palace, which was practically a great greenhouse of iron and glass, in shape resembling three immensely long packing-cases, superposed on each other, and diminishing in breadth and length as they ascended. The board meeting over, Paxton returned to town, taking his blotting-paper sketch with him. In a first-class railway compartment he met Robert Stephenson. The absorbing topic of the day, that of the Exhibition building, speedily arose, and Paxton produced his sketch and showed it to the great engineer. Before glancing at it the mighty builder of railway bridges, who was an inveterate smoker, lighted a big cigar. "It's wonderful, it's astonishing!" exclaimed Robert Stephenson

in honest admiration. "It is the only design that can possibly be accepted; only, as regards its form, it wants *something;* but I cannot exactly tell what that something is. I am an engineer and not an architect. This sketch must be shown to Charles Barry." The sketch, or rather an elaborate drawing of Paxton's design, was submitted to the distinguished architect of the Houses of Parliament, who, fully sharing the admiration expressed by Robert Stephenson, said quietly, "It only wants a transept." A transept was added, and the Crystal Palace was born.

CHAPTER VIII.

UNDER THE STARS AND STRIPES.

An Interview with Mr. James Gordon Bennett—The Civil War—The Voyage to New York Thirty Years Ago—A Confession of Prejudice—American Abuse—Phineas Taylor Barnum—Democratic Leaders—"The Young Napoleon"—John Van Buren—William Cullen Bryant—Dr. Bellows—N. P. Willis—War a "Gigantic Frolic"—No Hard Cash—American Railways—No Charge for Impedimenta—The American Custom House—A Fair Smuggler—The Mississippi Steamers—Barnum and the Beefsteak—River Steamer Gamblers—At Washington—A Teetotal Army—The Sanitary and the Christian Commission—No Corporal Punishment—Federal and Confederate Songs—The Feeling Against England—Lord Lyons's Diplomatic Success—His Dinners—Washington Hotels—An Ex-slave and His "Missy"—Charles Sumner—The Widow and the Coffin—Mr. Bayard's Stories—An Alleged Portrait of Jack Sheppard—The Capitol—Abraham Lincoln—A Specimen of His Humour—Mr. William H. Seward.

"WELL, sir; and so you have come to report us." Such was the greeting with which I was favoured one afternoon, early in December, 1863, by a tall, elderly, grey-haired gentleman somewhat spare of figure—*Seco de carnes y enjuto de rostro*, as Cervantes describes his hero—who was pacing rapidly to and fro in an apartment very high up in a tall house somewhere near the City Hall, New York. The room was

littered with books and papers; it was in truth the sanctum of the editor and proprietor of the *New York Herald*, the late Mr. James Gordon Bennett, to whom I had brought a letter of introduction from an American friend in London. "Well, sir, and so you have come to report us." I made answer that I had not come to the United States to do anything of the kind; since the journal to which I was attached had an accredited correspondent in New York; but that, as America happened at the time to be in the midst of war, I had been commissioned to visit the States to look at things in general and people in particular, and to give my own impressions as to what was going on around me. My chief ambition, I added, was to understand America and the American people; to which Mr. Bennett replied that if such were my aim he was afraid that I should be disappointed; inasmuch as, although he had been many years in the country, he was not quite certain that he understood America and the Americans himself.

The present generation may be able to form only an imperfect idea of the intense

excitement which prevailed throughout the United Kingdom as the great struggle between the North and the South became more and more accentuated and embittered. There was no Atlantic cable in those days; and it was with feverish anxiety that the British public waited day after day for news from the distracted Republic. It was impossible that such a gigantic conflict as was raging among our kindred on the other side of the Atlantic should not react on our political and social life at home. We had a cotton famine in Lancashire and a consequent infliction of the direst misery upon thousands and thousands of industrious operatives; while the rash seizure, by the commander of an American cruiser, of two Confederate Commissioners who had taken passage on board the British mail steamer *Trent* had brought this country to the very brink of war with America. As it was, although the dreadful peril was happily averted, a large military force was despatched to Canada; and other measures also were taken in view of the conflict which at one time seemed almost inevitable.

A voyage to New York thirty years ago was a much more serious enterprise than it has become at the present day, when the run from Queenstown is made in five or six days, and sanguine people are talking of an Atlantic trip which *viâ* Newfoundland is to be accomplished in three days. As a matter of fact—I own that we had one of the stormiest of passages—my voyage from Queenstown to Boston occupied eleven days. It was the Cunard steamer *Arabia*—Captain Cook, afterwards Commodore of the Cunard Fleet, commanding—on board which I proceeded to secure a berth.

The ship was a good sea-boat, and the seamanship of the skipper and his crew was unimpeachable; but when I remember the floating palace in which I voyaged to America only nine or ten years ago, I am fain to admit that in the way of accommodation a vast change has taken place between the Cunards of the past and those of the actual time; and I have little doubt that such changes, always in the direction of improvement, have been making themselves continuously felt since the period of my last visit

to the States. For example, on board the *Arabia* there was no regular passengers' smoking-room. Lovers of the weed enjoyed their tobacco in the capstan-house, which was in winter rather a raw and tempestuous kind of divan—a Cave of the Winds, in short—and the day before getting into port the house was dismantled in order that the capstan-bars might be fitted. Table-napkins were a luxury not then provided at luncheon and dinner; and the wine list did not include half-bottles of claret. A Cunard was, nevertheless, the steamship *par excellence* to be patronised by those who remembered that the Company had never lost a ship nor a passenger.

I took with me an ample supply of letters of introduction, which epistles in those days were perhaps more indispensable than they are now. To Lord Palmerston, then Prime Minister, I was indebted for a letter to his Excellency Lord Lyons, the British Minister at Washington; Mr. Charles Francis Adams, the representative of the United States at the Court of St. James, favoured me with a letter to Mr. William H. Seward, the American Secretary of State. I

have already mentioned my credentials to Mr. James Gordon Bennett; and furthermore the House of Rothschild were good enough to give me an introduction to the late Mr. August Belmont, the well-known banker of New York City.

I scarcely think that when I first set foot on American soil at Boston, Massachusetts, and then proceeded by river steamer and railway train to New York, I was quite as ignorant of American history, manners, and customs, and of the character of the American people, as Transatlantic journalists usually suppose British strangers within their gates to be. It had chanced that in Paris I had lived on terms of the closest intimacy with a select band of representative Americans, who held a kind of modest Amphitryonic Club at a *crèmerie* kept by Madame Busque, already mentioned in these pages; and there I remember to have met, among other distinguished persons from the New World, Horace Greeley. I had grown so superficially familiar with American speech and the humours of American life that I had been able, some time during the 'fifties, to write for *Household Words*

a somewhat droll short story called "The Conversion of Colonel Quagg," the scene of which was laid in New England, while the characters were altogether Yankees; and although when I reached New England itself, and studied the manners of the people, I recognised not a few blunders into which I had unavoidably fallen, I have never been taken very seriously to task by American critics for the errors which, naturally enough, had crept into my description of a region which I had never seen and of types of humanity whom I had never known.

It is quite as well, however, to confess that, although I had quite an open mind as to the social matters which I had to observe, and although I could see that gross injustice had been done, socially, to the Americans by Mrs. Trollope and Captain Marryat, and to a certain extent by Charles Dickens—I landed at Boston imbued from head to heel with a political prejudice which certainly disqualified me from looking at America in the Midst of War from the point of view whence that gigantic struggle was regarded by the "masses," but scarcely by the "classes," in England. I was a strong sympathiser

with the South; and it was to Charleston or to Richmond that I should properly have gone. And why my sympathies were so strongly in favour of the Confederates and altogether out of harmony with the feelings of the North, was simply because I had been brought up to regard the negro as my personal enemy. I came, by my mother's side, of a slave-holding family; and we had all been ruined, lock, stock, and barrel, by the abolition of slavery in the West Indies. Thus it was that most of that which I wrote about America in the war-time was tinted, and perhaps I ought even to say distorted, by the shadow of Quashie.

Unwittingly that "darkey" put knives under my pillow and halters in my pew. I never hated him, it is true, with the fierce loathing shown towards the Black Man by Carlyle, who had assuredly never been deprived of affluence by the emancipation of that Quashie for whom he prescribed such an abundant dose of "the beneficent cart-whip"; but I regarded him with a meek and silent sorrow, as having been the indirect means of impoverishing my family and myself. This was terribly selfish,

no doubt; but if you will study the history of some of the most fearful wars that have devastated the world in all ages, you will find that a great many of those wars had their origin in the paltriest possible matters of personal interest, of personal spite, or offended vanity. As luck would have it, I had not been many days in the Empire City ere I fell into the midst of a group of lawyers, bankers, doctors, politicians, and journalists who were a little more than Democrats. They were known as "Copperheads"; and it was not long ere that disparaging epithet was applied to myself; while, as my letters began to appear in the journal which I represented, there were added to the contumelious term such equally complimentary epithets in the Republican press of New York as "Bloated Miscreant," "Fat Cockney," "Venal Hack," and "Secesh Spy."

I remember once reading a particularly vituperative attack upon myself in some evening paper published in New York, in the course of which the writer politely hinted that my presence in America was as distasteful as would be that of Satan among the Sons of the

Lord, and to this he added a column of the most rancorous personal abuse. I had to leave for Saratoga the next morning; but before I went away I wrote that which I thought a temperate remonstrance to the editor of the paper in which I had been vilified. In two or three days I returned to New York, and was met by a friend who, in a tone of mild reproof, said, "Haven't you been long enough in this country to know that you should never answer a newspaper attack?" He showed me a copy of the journal to the editor of which I had written, and there, over my letter, I read this encouraging head-line—"The Notorious Sala. The Ruffian Replies." Then did I begin to comprehend the gist of Mr. James Gordon Bennett's incidental remark that, long as he had been domiciled in the States, he had not quite come to understand the American people; and my inability to understand them was further enhanced by the circumstance that, although I was roundly abused from time to time in the *New York Herald* itself, Mr. Bennett more than once sent me a pressing invitation to dine with him at his house at Washington Heights; and I was on equally good terms with Mr. Henry

Raymond, the editor and proprietor of the *New York Times*, a powerful Republican daily journal, who, at the period of his untimely decease, was Lieutenant-Governor of the State of New York. I renewed my acquaintance with Mr. Horace Greeley, who was at the head of the *New York Tribune;* while, on the Democratic side of journalism, I lived on the friendliest of terms with Mr. Manton Marble, the editor of the *World,* and with one of its most brilliant contributors, Mr. William Henry Hurlbert.

I may also make mention of a very old American friend whom I had known in Europe. I had dined with him, with Albert Smith, and the (happily) still living Mr. J. H. O'Dowd, at the old Garrick Club in King Street, Covent Garden, and his name was Phineas Taylor Barnum. He turned up one Sunday morning at the Brevoort House, in Clinton Place, Fifth Avenue, then the most comfortable and the most fashionable hotel in New York, and proposed that we should go to church together: the particular place of worship which he attended being one where an exceptionally eloquent Universalist preacher—Dr. Chapin, if I remember aright—was accustomed to hold

forth. Barnum was accompanied by a friend of his named Genin, a well-known hatter in Broadway, who had acquired a kind of notoriety by having given a fabulous sum of money for a ticket for Jenny Lind's first performance in New York city. So we all went to hear Dr. Chapin preach; and, if I did not join in psalmody myself, I certainly held the same hymn-book with Barnum. When you are at Rome your wisest course is to do as the Romans do. It was very wintry weather, but there was brilliant sunshine; and after church Barnum took me a drive in his two-horse sleigh up town. The Central Park was then in quite an embryo condition, and above it only the names or rather numbers of scores of streets were inscribed on the living rock of which the thoroughfares had been hewed. Those once rocky avenues are at present, I suppose, full of brown stone houses with marble façades, splendid stores, hotels, and, for aught I know, theatres and music-halls.

I saw a good deal of Barnum, who was then proprietor of the National Museum, afterwards burnt down, during my periodical residences in New York. I made the acquaintance

of sundry giants, dwarfs, living skeletons, and spotted girls in his employment, and was once invited to a tea-party given by the Albino Family; but the soirée was put off, owing to there having been a fight between two of the members of the Family, in the course of which encounter one of the combatants, a lady, had had her pink eyes transformed into lovely black ones. I may also mention as a proof of the "all-round" nature of my acquaintances in New York, that my most intimate and most hospitable friend was the late Mr. James Lorimer Graham, junior, a stanch Republican, who died a few years ago, United States Consul-General at Florence. Mr. Lorimer Graham was a gentleman of the very highest culture, an assiduous collector of books, prints, drawings, and coins; an extensive traveller, and a man altogether of good gifts and bright acquirements. At his mansion in Washington Square he and his charming wife received the flower of Republican society. There I have met George Bancroft, the historian of the United States, and Bayard Taylor, poet, traveller, and scholar, who died American Minister at Berlin. As for the Federal generals

and colonels whom one met at Lorimer Graham's, their names were, comparatively speaking, legion.

As an alternative to the Republican politics to which—mingled with a good deal of abuse of England—one had to listen in Washington Square, I had the privilege of meeting the principal members of the Democratic party at a house at Fifth Avenue, and afterwards in Union or in Madison Square—I forget exactly which—the residence of the late Mr. Samuel L. M. Barlow, a member of a distinguished firm of lawyers. There I first saw General McClellan, who in 1863–4 was talked of throughout the North as "The Young Napoleon." Mr. Barlow had a library sumptuous in its wealth of rare works relative to early American history; and many of his literary treasures had been procured and arranged for him by the loving care of Mr. Henry Harrisse, who speaks French and English as well as M. Waddington did, and who is an American citizen, although I believe his extraction to be Gallic.

Then came the clubs, at which I was a frequent guest, and at one of which I met the celebrated Commodore Vanderbilt, a tough-

looking old gentleman of few words. Frequently, again, did I meet Mr. John Van Buren, the son of Martin Van Buren, some time President of the United States. Great things in the political line had been expected from John Van Buren; but I should say that constitutional indolence had led him to neglect the splendid opportunities which, at the outset of his career, he enjoyed. He used to tell amusing stories, which seemed to show that, beneath all his apparent *insouciance*, there was a good deal of acumen. He had visited England while Queen Victoria was yet unmarried, and had had the honour, at a State ball at Buckingham Palace, of taking part in a Royal quadrille. Thus, when he returned to New York, the sobriquet, half-envious, half-sportive, was bestowed on him of "Prince John."

The nickname travelled to the particular district in Pennsylvania which he represented in Congress. The majority of the electors were fierce Democrats—which meant fifty years ago precisely the contrary of what the term now means in American politics; and "Prince John" was summoned to attend an indignation

meeting of his constituents to explain his conduct in bowing down in the House of Rimmon and dancing in the society of queens and princesses. It was very hot weather, and the angry constituents of "Prince John," who were chiefly composed of Dutch farmers, unanimously took off their coats as their member ascended the platform: not only showing thereby their sense of the sultriness of the day, but their wrathful contempt for the pomps and vanities of the effete Old World. John Van Buren was equal to the occasion. He took off his own coat and addressed his audience in his shirt-sleeves; and they were so enraptured by his oratory that indignation was turned into the wildest of enthusiasm.

At another club, called, I think, The Century, I had the honour of meeting Mr. Bryant, the poet-journalist; and I also remember the Rev. Dr. Bellows, whom I have already, in a preceding chapter, mentioned as the friend of Thackeray. It was in Dr. Bellows's own church, as I have said before, that the illustrious English novelist had delivered his lectures on "The Four Georges." Another once familiar face

floats before me as I pen these lines. Prior to my departure, my old friend Edward Dicey had given me a letter of introduction to Mr. Nathaniel Parker Willis, whose delightful book of European travels, called "Pencillings by the Way," I had been familiar with from my boyhood. I found Mr. Willis in New York, turned into an elderly imitation of Count D'Orsay, with perhaps a slight dash of Mr. Mantalini about him. He was a most able critic, a charming essayist, and a fascinating writer of short stories; but he could never tear himself away from the remembrances of the time which he had spent in fashionable society in London; and his talk was continually of duchesses and countesses, of Almack's and the Opera, and of the great country houses in England and in the Highlands at which he had been a guest. I am afraid that I did not gain very much in his good graces when I playfully told a mutual acquaintance that in memory of the old Almack's days the author of "Pencillings by the Way" ought to call his residence "Willis's Rooms." However, we were tolerably good friends, and he was

really a delightful person to listen to; being full of anecdotes and sketches of character which, when he could get "Webster's Royal Red Book" out of his head, were really entertaining. He had known Thomas Moore; and that fact alone made him worth listening to.

The winter seasons of 1863–4, both in New York and Washington, were of almost unexampled brilliance and gaiety; but ere I ask you to journey with me to the Federal capital, and make the acquaintance of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, and many more political and literary notabilities, I must briefly dwell on what may, I think, be considered as one of the most remarkable of the social phenomena connected with the great War of Secession. It was an American and not an English observer who said that "the war was one gigantic frolic to the North;" and, socially, that really seemed to be the case. Balls, receptions, and dinner parties were rife. Fancy fairs, held with the beneficent object of providing comforts and luxuries for the Federal troops, took place almost every week. Theatres and opera-houses

drew crowded audiences. Your correspondence, your acquaintances, your newspapers told you every day that from the State of Virginia right down South a fierce and almost implacable war was raging; that cities were being beleagured, fortresses bombarded, battles fought, and whole States devastated by fire and sword. The slaughter was immense; the hospitals near the seat of war were crammed, and devoted men and women were working even as Florence Nightingale worked in the Crimea to assuage the miseries of the sick and wounded. Before the war had come to a close the North was to have a million of men under arms; and the maintenance of this colossal host, and of flotillas of cruisers and gun-boats blockading all the Southern ports, involved an expenditure which raised the indebtedness of the Union to an aggregate exceeding in proportion that of the National Debt of England, which had taken more than a hundred years to accumulate.

These patent and tremendous facts failed to make the North desist from its frolicsome mood; and the strangest circumstance connected with the festivity and merriment pervading in the

great Northern cities was that no hard cash whatsoever was discernible, anywhere. Paper money was the law of the hour. "Greenbacks," as the currency was called, ranged from the value of a few cents to thousands of dollars. There were, moreover, in circulation millions of notes issued by banks which, by this time, I should say, have all but completely disappeared. Gold was at a premium fluctuating between ninety and one hundred and twenty. Not an inconsiderable number of thinking persons were of opinion that the greenbacks would never be redeemed, and that they would become eventually as worthless as the *assignats* issued during the First Revolution: vast quantities of which notes were forged by the Government of Mr. Pitt with the view of injuring French credit. But the predictions of these pessimists were practically invalidated by the overwhelming and, as it proved in the end, well-justified confidence of the North in its own resources. Financially, the country was in a state of bankruptcy; but the feeling was that if its affairs had to be wound up, the assets would be sufficient to pay more than two hundred cents on the dollar.

This feeling, sometimes quietly and sometimes ostentatiously expressed, was the deep underlying reason for the frolicsome temper of the North. The people were extravagant to lavishness, because the supply of paper money was inexhaustible; and although it was sometimes darkly hinted that a day of reckoning was at hand, the believers in the destiny of the North went on spending their greenbacks as gaily as ever, and awaited with cheerful complacency the coming of the morrow. As it turned out, that morrow brought them a political victory and a renewal of commercial prosperity almost unexampled in their magnitude.

While almost delirious gaiety reigned in New York during the winter season of 1863, Washington was even sprightlier; and the festal aspect of the time was more markedly visible to the stranger for the reason that the gaiety was concentrated in a smaller area. It was between New York and Washington that I first made acquaintance with an American sleeping-car, which in 1863 was a far less comfortable institution than the palatial bed-rooms on wheels to which travellers, both in the States and in

Europe, have for some years past been accustomed. And this is, perhaps, the place in which there would be most appropriately put on record the impressions produced on the mind of a newly-arrived stranger as to the speed, the accommodation, and the general economy of American railways. Of course, I had repeatedly read about the advantages of the car system as against the stuffy, locked-up compartments in the trains of my own country; and the advantages of the American system in this respect are as patent to me now as ever they were whenever I travel by a Pullman from London to Brighton, or *vice versâ*. I am, nevertheless, constrained to remark that I had not undertaken half-a-dozen journeys by rail in the States before I was forced to part, very sorrowfully, with a large number of long-cherished illusions. I had been told a great deal about the astonishing rate of speed attained on many American lines, and had heard their trains compared to "greased lightning" and so forth; and of others dashing along at so furious a rate that the telegraph posts looked only like a row of park palings. As a matter of fact, on my first trip from

New York to Philadelphia, thence to Baltimore, and so on to Washington, I found that the speed of the train did not exceed twenty miles an hour; and that the cars, although undeniably convenient in several respects, were in many others extremely uncomfortable, malodorous, questionably clean, and overheated to an almost intolerable extent; while at early morning the thin cascades of tobacco-juice proceeding from the lips of gentlemen addicted to chewing had the reverse of a pleasant effect on more than one of the senses.

All these little drawbacks have long since been amended, I suppose, and the railway service between New York and Washington is at present, I have been informed, a model of swiftness, handsomeness, and comfort; but thirty years ago a railway train in America could only be regarded as a disagreeable necessity. You were compelled under certain circumstances to avail yourself of the cars, but you felt profoundly grateful when you emerged from them. In two particulars, however, you were bound to admit the vast superiority of Brother Jonathan's railway system over our own.

You might take as much luggage as ever you pleased with you; and not a cent was charged for the transport of your *impedimenta.* To be sure, it was expedient to have your trunks as strong and as well corded as possible, or protected by metal bands, since the porters had a sportive habit of "dumping" down your belongings without the slightest regard for their fragility or the contrary; and of flinging them into the luggage-van in that which seemed to you to be an entirely reckless and happy-go-lucky manner.

But these slight aberrations were amply atoned for by the circumstance that you had no trouble whatsoever in getting your luggage when you reached your destination. All you had to do when you were approaching your goal was to confer with the agent of the Adams' Express Company who was on board the car. You handed him the counterpart metal check which had been attached by a strap to your various trunks and boxes at starting. You had to pay him a certain sum, and told him at what hotel or private house you intended to stay, and a very short time after

your arrival there you found your baggage quite safe, if not altogether sound from the rough treatment which it had undergone *in transitu*.

I have never been able to discover why the check system and the Adams' Express machinery should not be introduced on European railways. The cab-drivers, of course, would protest against the introduction of such an innovation; but, with the exception of the Jehus, everybody, I should say, would rejoice at the change. While I am on the subject of luggage I may be allowed to say a very few words about the American Custom House as I first knew it. Landing at Boston, it was to the tender mercies of Massachusetts *douaniers* that we were consigned. The officers were altogether civil and obliging, and gave us no kind of trouble. A very different experience, however, might have been mine when, a few months later, I journeyed from New York to Havana on my way to Mexico. I was fortunate enough to have been furnished with credentials to the Collector of the Port of New York, who kindly recommended me to some

official connected with the Customs. A special officer was told off to examine my luggage on board the departing steamer; and after I had given him my word of honour that I had no firearms, save my own revolver, no sealed letters, no quinine, and no spurs in my luggage, the formality of opening my boxes was very slight and very rapid.

On the other hand, many of the passengers, ladies as well as gentlemen, had not only to undergo the infliction of having the contents of their trunks turned out piece by piece, and tossed as though the officers were making a salad; but were compelled, in many instances, to submit to the indignity of a personal search — revolvers, quinine, sealed letters, and spurs being the objects most diligently sought for. I soon learned from an official the guiding motive of this minute inquisition. The steamer, at a certain point of our journey, would be boarded by an intercolonial steamer bound for Nassau, in the West Indies; and Nassau was a rendezvous for Confederate agents, who found there the quinine which was so sorely wanted in the Con-

federate hospitals, and the small firearms which were so badly wanted by the "Secesh" officers. There was a great demand, too, in the Southern cavalry for spurs; and, finally, the sealed letters constituted what was known as a "rebel mail." Thousands of letters addressed to persons in the South were illicitly posted from the Northern cities in the course of every week, not only from those who had relatives or friends in the South, but by the "Secesh" spies with whom every Northern town, but especially New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and Baltimore, swarmed.

Very many of these spies, on either side of Mason and Dixon's line, belonged to the fair sex; and I shall not easily forget the almost hysterical indignation shown by one of our lady fellow-passengers—a pretty, fair-haired girl, by the way—when she was informed that she must go below and have an interview with the female searcher. "She smuggle anything! Preposterous! How dared they think of such a thing?" Down the companion-way she went, however. She did not return, but the searcher did. "Found anything?" asked the chief officer of Customs. "You bet! Eight revolvers

hung round the hoop of her crinoline." "Any rebel mail?" "Why, cert'nly. Twenty sealed letters in her chignon." "Anything in her bonnet-box?" "Only a human skull, labelled 'Chickahominy!'"

I have not the slightest doubt that, proportionately speaking, there were quite as many Northern or Federal spies in Richmond, Charleston, and other Confederate strongholds. In fact, it seems to me that throughout the war, so far as misdemeanours on either side were concerned, it was a case morally of six of one and half-a-dozen of the other.

Confederates and Federals had their respective war-songs, some of them exceedingly spirited. Federals and Confederates had their respective uniforms and their respective terms of derisive abuse for the martial panoply of their foes. Thus, in the North, the warriors of General Lee, who wore a light drab uniform, were known by the contumelious nickname of "greybacks." The South returned the compliment, and called the Federal soldiers, whose upper garment was a kind of gabardine of a light azure hue, "filthy bluebellies."

Ere for the time I quit the subject of American railways and American Custom Houses, I may mention that I have always been desperately puzzled as to who was really the inventor of the sleeping-car. It existed, as everybody knows, prior to the time of Mr. Pullman, whose name is as well known in Europe as it is in his native country; whose immense carriage-building works I have inspected at Chicago, and whose hospitality, both in his own house and in his own cars, I have more than once enjoyed. I have somewhere read that our great engineer Brunel devised, while he was constructing the Great Western Railway, something approaching a sleeping-car, but only for one passenger—himself. All students of vehicular history are likewise well aware that even in remote antiquity sleeping litters on poles supported on men's shoulders were common; and they probably resembled, to some extent, the native palanquins which one sees at the present day in the streets of Calcutta. At the same time I cannot resist the impression that the American sleeping-car, with its tiers of lower and upper berths, was suggested by the almost entirely

identical berths in the saloons of the river steamers, on which, whenever it was possible, Americans shipped themselves when a river lay in their line of route, in order that they might escape for a brief period from the discomfort and the vitiated atmosphere of the railway cars.

The great Mississippi steamers which used to run as far as New Orleans, and the accommodation on board which was simply magnificent, had ceased to ply when the war broke out; but on numerous occasions, in New England and elsewhere, I was able to avail myself of the elegant comfort to be found on board a river steamer. The fare on board the American steamers I always found plentiful in quantity and tolerable in quality; still, it must be admitted that there were many stock jokes current as to the meagreness of the provisions supplied by the Steamship Companies to their guests; and among these was a story about Barnum, who, demanding once a beefsteak at supper, had handed over his shoulder by the negro waiter a piece of rather thin and certainly over-grilled flesh, which he described as resembling

in form and colour an Ethiop's ear. "That's what I mean," quoth the great showman; "bring me some."

These vessels, as I knew them in 1863, were not infested to any very appreciable extent by those professional gamblers and cardsharpers who were the bane of the great Mississippi steamers, and who often became such a nuisance that the captain would sometimes cause the vessel to lie-to and land the gamblers at the first dismal swamp lying convenient. I did, however, hear of a gentleman who, just before my time, had been appointed to a diplomatic mission in the Old World, and who, in view of the aristocratic surroundings with which he was soon to be made acquainted, had provided himself with a very handsome dressing-case, the fittings of which were mounted in silver. He had a state-room to himself, and he was never tired of opening this splendid *nécessaire de voyage* and examining the cut-glass bottles with the silver tops. While engaged in this pleasant task he became aware of two strangers, who were intently eyeing him through the half-open door of the cabin; and, slightly

blushing, he hastily closed his dressing-case. "No harm, Mister," amicably observed one of the strangers, "we both of us like a gamble, *bring out your deck.*" Now the two strangers had mistaken the American Minister Plenipotentiary to one of the Courts of Europe for a professional gambler travelling about with the apparatus known as a "faro deck" in search of simpletons to fleece. I must freely grant also that while gamblers were few on board the steamers on which I travelled, there was a complete absence of rowdies. No six-shooters were produced, no bowie-knives were brandished.

It was at early morning that I reached Washington, in the District of Columbia; but matutinal as was the hour, I found the approaches to the depôt and the adjoining streets thronged with Federal troops and volunteers. All day, indeed, and half the night there was a perpetual marching up and down of soldiers of all arms. And let me hasten to state a very few simple facts touching this Federal force, which must, from a great many points of view, be regarded as the

most wonderful army that has ever been seen in the world.

While in Washington, or passing through any populous town, it was next door to impossible to prevent the wearers of the sky-blue gabardines from drinking alcoholic liquors, and sometimes taking a good deal too much of them. The commanding officers, especially those in charge of volunteer regiments, had a characteristic way of dealing with soldiers who had got outrageously tipsy. Every morning the provost-marshal operated on a certain number of delinquents by causing them to be played upon by the hose of a fire-engine. Now, it has been my lot to journey by a P. & O. in the month of May in the Red Sea; and the heat was occasionally so fearfully oppressive that the ladies would entreat the quartermasters to give them a *douche* of cold water from the hose. Such treatment was no doubt very refreshing when the temperature may have been 110 in the shade; but to be heavily and protractedly drenched with icy cold water when the thermometer is below zero can scarcely be called an unmingled delight. Let it be, however, dis-

tinctly understood that in the field and in camp, that army, which, as I have previously said, became eventually a million strong, was, so far as the rank and file were concerned, wholly and completely a Teetotal Army. Not one drop of whisky, wine, or beer was allowed to be sold at the canteens. Small quantities of whisky were, it is true, from time to time smuggled in, and this contraband liquor was usually contained in shallow oblong flasks, made up to resemble Bibles and Testaments, with neat metallic clasps. It was the officers, however, and not the men, who, as a rule, were able to obtain these surreptitious supplies of Bourbon; and I remember once reading in a Washington paper a pathetic letter from one of the wearers of the sky-blue gabardines in which he professed his great love for Scripture, but objected to seeing a Testament staggering about with a pair of shoulder-straps on — embroidered shoulder-straps being the characteristic badge of a commissioned officer.

The Federal troops were able to dispense with strong drink owing to the amazingly good care which had been bestowed on their

personal comfort by a body called the Sanitary Commission, of which there were branches all over the North, and which were able to deal with immense sums of money. In aid of its funds balls and fancy bazaars were frequently held; and the voluntary contributions formed in addition a tremendous aggregate. It was not only medicines and hospital appliances that the Sanitary Commission supplied to those who were fighting for the Union; it supplemented in a hundred different ways the abnormally abundant rations served out by the Government to the soldiers. Cakes, pies, fruit, potted meats, and even those "candies," or lollipops, of which abstaining Americans are often immoderately fond, were freely supplied to the Federal warriors, who also revelled, thanks to the care of the Commission, in fleecy hosiery, night-caps, worsted mittens, and slippers. In addition to this Sanitary Commission, there was another, called the Christian Commission, which ministered to the spiritual needs of the rank and file by the distribution of Bibles and tracts, and by paying the stipends of additional chaplains.

One other equally significant fact I mention with regard to the marvellous Army of the Potomac. These legions were governed practically without corporal punishment; nor, save in a very few instances, when some peculiarly heinous offence against military law had been committed, was the punishment of death inflicted. I remember when I was down with the Federal army in Virginia seeing, at the general headquarters, a wretched creature—a delinquent soldier—who, under the grim guard of a sentry, was sweeping all the refuse away and shovelling it into baskets. He was to endure so many hours of this humiliating drudgery for so many days, as he had been guilty, so I was told, of some exceptionally disgraceful crime. Now and again, also, some martinet commanding officer would venture upon a course of procedure slightly analogous to bodily punishment. I have heard of offending soldiers being "spread-eagled," that is to say, tied by the wrists and ankles to the wheel of a gun or an ammunition waggon, and left bare-headed for a certain time in the blazing sun. But these certainly indefensible punishments were very rarely resorted

to. Remembering that the use of the cat was common in the British army during the Crimean War; that flogging in the army was not totally abolished until the passing of the Army Discipline Act in April, 1881; and that in the French army, although corporal punishment has long since disappeared from it, the death penalty is frequently enforced, it can scarcely have failed to strike an onlooker with astonishment that the American commanders should have been able to preserve discipline among the hundreds of thousands of men serving under them without scourging, and without hanging or shooting them in a proportion even remotely approaching the infliction of such extreme penalties in the French army. It must be remembered, moreover, that the "bluebellies" comprised in their ranks an astoundingly miscellaneous congregation of humanity.

There was, truly, a very numerous element of sternly resolute, unflinchingly energetic soldiers, who were fighting not only for the unity of the Republic, but for conscience' sake, and would have regarded the cause of the emancipation of the negro as a kind of

Holy War. These, the worthy descendants of the old Puritans, were practically the leaven that gave life and vigour to the whole Federal army. You will remember the tune, if you have forgotten the words, of the once popular anti-slavery song, "John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave," with the burden, "But his Soul is marching on." At the height of the war another verse was added, beginning "We'll hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple-tree;" but it was reserved for a New England lady—Mrs. Julia Ward Howe—to adapt to the hackneyed tune of "John Brown" words of burning and commanding eloquence. Of this thrilling *grida di guerra* I remember just two stanzas:

For mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord—
He is trampling out the vintage where His grapes of wrath are stored;
I have seen the fitful lightning of His terrible swift sword,
For God is marching on.
In the beauty of the lilies Christ was borne across the sea;
There's a glory in His visage which transfigures you and me;
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
For God is marching on.

These lines may strike the fastidious or the cynical as stilted, if not slightly irreverent; but by those who have heard, as I have, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe's verses sung in unison, with a thunderous refrain of "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!" by a Massachusetts regiment on the march, two thousand strong, the effect on the imagination, both of the soldiers and the spectators, by this sonorous chant may be readily imagined. Nor were the Confederates behindhand in patriotic lyrics. There was "Dixie," to begin with; and thousands of "greybacks" round their camp-fires were never weary of proclaiming at the top of their voices their readiness to "Live and die for Dixie." "The Bonny Blue Flag" was another favourite Confederate song; and when the South was in its direst straits for the comforts of life, and gently-nurtured females went about almost in rags, immense popularity was attained by a song called "The Homespun Dress," alluding to the coarse home-produced frieze in which women in the South, who had long worn silks and satins, cheerfully attired themselves. One verse ran thus:

I envy not the Yankee girl
  Her pearls and jewels rare,
Though diamonds deck her painted neck
  And gold her false back hair.
    Huzza ! huzza ! for the Sunny South, huzza !
And three times three for the homespun dress
  The Southern ladies wear !

Rarely has there fallen to the lot of a British diplomatist a task of such delicacy and difficulty as that which had to be unremittingly pursued between 1858 and 1864 by the Right Hon. Richard Bickerton Pemell, second Lord Lyons, to whom, so soon as I arrived at Washington, I delivered the letter with which I had been favoured by Lord Palmerston. Her Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary was accredited to a Government which regarded that of his own country with feelings always of acerbity, and frequently of ill-disguised hostility. Individual Englishmen mingled freely with the best Washington society, and partook of that ample hospitality which is a traditional characteristic of Americans; but Great Britain, as a nation, was absolutely loathed in the North. There had been serious friction between the two Governments during the Crimean War, when

Mr. Crampton, our Minister to the United States, had been unceremoniously sent about his business by the American Secretary of State for the alleged offence of enlisting American citizens in the British service. Lord Lyons had to take up the tangled skein of diplomacy, to find it further complicated by a web of grievances, bickerings, recriminations, and general misunderstandings arising from the Civil War; but with infinite tact, skill, courtesy, and patience he was enabled to a very great extent to extricate himself from the exceptionally "tight place" into which circumstances over which he had no control had placed him, and to become eventually, perhaps, the most popular envoy that the Court of St. James's had ever sent to the Great Republic. There were two factors which, I apprehend, in an eminent degree conduced to Lord Lyons's diplomatic success.

In the first place, he was an extremely and consistently taciturn gentleman, and possessed, to a surprising extent, the art of saying little. That he had a keen sense of humour I am satisfied; for I have often watched the smile which played about his lips and the merry

twinkle in his eye when a droll story was told him. Of speech, however, he was systematically reticent; although that which he said was always to the point and full of quiet appreciativeness and good sense. That he was a most voluminous writer of despatches his private secretary, Mr. Sheffield, and all the gentlemen of the Legation knew full well; in fact, I should opine that throughout the war there had never been a harder-worked Chancery than that of her Britannic Majesty in the Federal capital. Late into the night did Lord Lyons work; and multitudinous must be the shelves at the Foreign Office filled with the State papers which he was continually sending to Whitehall. The British Legation at Washington was, moreover, an admirable school for *attachés* who were bent on taking their vocation seriously; and among the *personnel* of the Chancery I especially remember one very assiduous young Second Secretary, who is now Sir Edward Malet, G.C.B., British Ambassador at Berlin.

The amount of the diplomatic hard work which had to be gone through was literally

tremendous; and scarcely a Cunard or an Inman steamship left New York or arrived thereat without there being among the passengers on board a Queen's Messenger, the bearer of despatches to or from England. Truly the old order has changed with a vengeance since the laying of the Atlantic cable. I fancy that the gentlemen whose badge of office is a running greyhound in gold—Captain the Hon. Conway Seymour, Captain Cecil Johnson, and his brother Mr. Godschall Johnson, were the messengers on the Atlantic roster in my time—had rather a lively time of it than otherwise; lively in the sense of these gentlemen being always welcome in American and Anglo-American society; livelier when it is remembered that throughout the winter it was their lot, about once a fortnight, to have ten days' tossing-about on the stormy Atlantic.

The second reason for Lord Lyons's favourable acceptance at Washington was that he surpassed all his diplomatic colleagues in giving good dinners. He was the most bounteous Amphitryon whose hospitality I was ever privileged to enjoy; and I can speak as somewhat of an expert in this respect, since during many

years' wanderings as a "commercial traveller" for a great business firm in Fleet Street, E.C., it has been my fortune to sit at the tables of Lord Lyons and of Sir Edward Thornton at Washington; of Lord Dufferin and Sir Henry Elliot at Constantinople; of Sir John Crampton and of Sir Austen Henry Layard at Madrid; of Lord Dufferin and of Lord Augustus Loftus at St. Petersburg; of the Earl of Dufferin, again, in the Russian capital, of the Marquis of Dufferin in Rome and in Paris; of Lord Blomfield at Vienna; and of Lord Vivian in Rome. When I say that the diplomatic banquets at Washington were as sumptuous and as tasteful as those which subsequently distinguished Lord Lyons's entertainments in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, I have said enough, I think, to give experienced travellers an idea of how highly his Excellency's advances in the good graces of Americans were furthered by his princely hospitality and unfailing courtesy as a host.

Good dinners were, indeed, very much wanted at Washington during the war. The hospitality of the White House was abundant, but frugal; and the cuisine was conducted on a

system of simplicity which was almost Spartan. Of course the statement was audaciously libellous which was circulated by those who disliked the President and his Administration, to the effect that Mrs. Lincoln had once announced that dinner was ready in these curt terms, "Abraham, the vittles is up;" but trustworthier reports gained credence that, save on "party" days, pork and beans, oyster stew, Indian pudding, and baked shad were the staple viands at the Presidential table. Equal simplicity marked the prandial arrangements of the President's Ministry. Mr. Seward, Mr. Chase, and Mr. Staunton cared little, if anything, for show or parade; and in any case it must be remembered that the emoluments both of the President and his Ministers were considerably less in 1863 than they are at the present time. As regards Members of Congress, although there were some Senators and Members of the Lower House who were very wealthy and who entertained handsomely, the great mass of the Federal Legislators boarded at the hotels in and about Pennsylvania Avenue and dined in the public room.

The chief caravanserai when I first saw Washington was Willard's: a huge establishment, very excellently conducted by a polite and considerate landlord; but the table d'hôte did not present much more than the usual American wilderness of second-rate cookery. There was no branch of Delmonico's at Washington! and the fare at one hotel was almost identical with that which you enjoyed—if enjoyment is precisely the proper term to use—at another. There was, however, one very pleasant characteristic of the Washington hotels during the winter season. These were the "hops," or unceremonious balls, to which the guests at the different hotels invited each other in rotation. It was certainly a curious and amusing sight to watch Ministers of State, Judges of the Supreme Court, Generals in the army, Congressmen, and distinguished lawyers joining in the mazy dance with a most miscellaneous assemblage of what the Americans call "ornary" people; but at all these "hops" there was a very brilliant show of female beauty; in fact, quite as many pretty girls could be seen at a Washington hotel "hop" as are visible at the

cognate festivities given at our own Scarborough during the season.

Of the same high class as Willard's were the Arlington, the Riggs House, and the Congressional; and the mention of the penultimate hotel named reminds me that when I visited Washington for the second time, which was fifteen years after the war, I lodged at a most comfortable and well-appointed hotel, with an admirable cuisine and a well-trained staff of servants, all negroes, kept by one Mr. W., who was himself a man of colour, and had been, before the war, a slave of Mr. Riggs, a partner in the well-known banking firm of Riggs and Corcoran. The proclivities of Mr. Corcoran were Southern. He had to leave Washington in a hurry; and the Federal Government temporarily confiscated the magnificent art gallery which he had erected, and converted it into a store for army clothing. Mr. Riggs weathered the political storm and remained unmolested in the Federal capital. He was always very kind to me; and on the occasion of my second visit told me a somewhat touching tale about his former bond-servant. One of Mr. Riggs's

daughters had married an American gentleman, who went on a diplomatic mission to China. The climate of Pekin disastrously disagreed with the lady; and she returned to Washington almost entirely broken down in health, and well-nigh incapable of taking any nourishment whatsoever. The coloured hotel-keeper, who had been her father's slave, and who had known her from her infancy, begged hard to be allowed to see her. He came and found the poor lady reclining on the sofa, weak and attenuated to a shocking degree, and painfully endeavouring to swallow a little pounded ice. Big tears rolled down the sable cheeks of the ex-bondman, but at length he dried his eyes, and in a resolute tone said: "What you want, Missy, is a good bellyful of vittles. Ise the man to send 'em." So he went back to his hotel, and incited his cook to prepare divers succulent and craftily-cooked dainty dishes, with the view, as he put it, of "making Missy a well woman." She did get well, I hope.

I had not been long in Washington ere I called on the Hon. Charles Sumner, United States Senator, who, as an eminent lawyer and

a most eloquent and determined opponent of slavery, was known in England almost as well as he was in his native country. When I renewed my acquaintance with him, Mr. Sumner was chairman of the Senatorial Committee on Foreign Relations. He was a tall, handsome, well set-up gentleman; although I was given to understand that he had never entirely recovered from the heavy blow on the head inflicted with a thick cane, in Congress itself, by one Mr. Preston S. Brooks, a member of that illustrious assembly, and a fierce Southerner. Mr. Sumner had a very deep, sonorous voice, very much resembling that of our great tragedian, William Charles Macready, whose manner and even gestures I think the American statesman must have carefully studied. Indeed, his manner, as I have hinted in an earlier chapter, was a little more than academical; it was slightly histrionic; and when I speak of academics, it should not be forgotten that in the very midst of this tremendous life-and-death struggle between the North and the South Mr. Sumner found time and occasion to move in the Senate a lengthy and elaborate resolution in favour of

establishing a National Academy of American Literature. I accompanied him to the Capitol, and heard him make his most eloquent speech; and afterwards, taking me into his private room, he showed me the first printed proof of President Lincoln's Proclamation of the Abolition of Slavery in the United States, with various emendations made in the President's autograph. Pleasantly enough, many years afterwards I found myself in this same room at the Capitol, in the company of Senator Bayard of Delaware, now American Ambassador to England; and there I was regaled, not only with oysters on the half-shell, and other toothsome accessories, solid and liquid, but with some of the drollest of stories—Senator Bayard being, next to Mr. William Maxwell Evarts and Mr. Chauncey Depew, about the best teller of funny stories I ever heard.

To Mr. Evarts belongs the anecdote of the bereaved widow whose husband had such a large circle of friends that the company which she received on the evening of his interment crowded her drawing-room almost to suffocation. A lady-friend of the widow

edged her way up to her, and, pointing to something very bright and shining visible above the heads of the assembly, in a remote corner of the apartment, whispered in her ear, "Say, is that a new eight-day clock? What d'ye gi'n for sich?" "It's not a clock," sobbed the disconsolate widow, "it's the dear departed. We sot him on eend to make room for more company." The supposed eight-day clock was indeed the "casket," richly ornamented with silver nails, bosses, and handles, to which the dear departed had been consigned.

But in Senator Bayard is vested the copyright of the story of the two Western cowboys who had been to hear a lecture on Junius, and one of whom, subsequently imbibing too much whisky "straight," got at last into the lachrymose stage of inebriety, and, sitting up in bed, passionately besought his companion to tell him "who writ them letters to Julius." Nor would he be pacified till the other cowboy assured him that he knew "Julius" very well, and that he had made him a present of the letters in question, which had been securely locked up in the hotel

safe by the clerk in the office below. Likewise does there pertain to Senator Bayard the anecdote of a well-known New York humorist, who occasionally indulged too freely in the vintages of Épernay, and who, being asked to dinner by Mr. Bayard at his house in Washington, was observed by his host, who had himself walked home with him, to be attentively counting the number of steps in the high "stoop," or flight of stairs, in front of the mansion. "What on earth are you counting those steps for?" asked the Senator. "*Got to come down again!*" was the reply of the prescient humorist and admirer of "Extra Dry."

I cannot exactly remember whether it was Mr. Bayard or some other American legislator who showed me one of the most curious works of pictorial art that I have ever beheld. It was a painting hanging in the bar-parlour of a kind of tavern or luncheon house in a *carrefour* off Pennsylvania Avenue, and it was a portrait in oil—evidently a very old one—of a haggard-looking young man, with a stubbly beard and in eighteenth-century costume. This, I was assured, was the effigy of

the notorious housebreaker Jack Sheppard, the hero of Harrison Ainsworth's mischievous romance; and the picture, it was further alleged, had been painted from life by Sir James Thornhill while the wretched malefactor lay under sentence of death in Newgate. Now Jack Sheppard, as we see him in George Cruikshank's etchings, and as some of us have had the happiness to behold him in the delightful impersonation of Mrs. Keeley, has a closely-cropped bullet head and cleanly-shaven cheeks and chin; but, to my mind, the internal evidence as to the authenticity of the portrait which I saw at Washington is strengthened by the fact that when Jack Sheppard was for the last time an inmate of the condemned hold he was chained hand and foot with fetters of unusual weight: that he could not have shaved himself; and in all probability no barber would have been allowed to shave him, in view of the contingency of the desperate wretch thrusting his throat against the sharp blade of the razor, so as to bring about either a mortal wound or serious mutilation.

There was nothing very materially different

between the Capitol at Washington as I saw it in 1863 and the Capitol which I visited in 1879 and in 1884. One notable disappearance I did indeed take account of. At the time of my first visit, there was a liquor-bar attached to the Senate, and which was known familiarly as "The Hole in the Wall." That "Hole in the Wall" was closed by authority—I do not know whether the closure was permanent—after a somewhat unseemly exhibition which took place on the morning of the inauguration of President Andrew Johnson. Otherwise, an unprejudiced traveller would at once admit that the Capitol at Washington is one of the noblest legislative palaces in the world, and that the Senate is, in particular, remarkable for the stateliness of its proportions and the handsomeness of its appointments. I met Mr. Sumner later in the same day in the gardens of the White House, officially known as the Executive Mansion, which no Briton, I am afraid, can contemplate without some kind of secret compunction; seeing that the original edifice was wantonly burnt by the British troops during the raid on Washington in 1814. Entering the Mansion, Mr. Sumner

took me at once to President Lincoln's private office, where he presented me to the illustrious Chief Magistrate of the Republic; and at the Presidential levée which followed I was presented to Mrs. Lincoln.

It would be quite superfluous to give you anything like a detailed account of the personal appearance of Abraham Lincoln—the rail-splitter, lawyer, Congressman, President, and patriot, who in the end laid down his life for a country to which he had rendered such magnificent services. Let it suffice to say that he was so tall that you felt inclined to ask, as an American joker put it, "How the weather was up there"—meaning the Presidential head. He was a gaunt, wiry, grizzled man, with searching eyes and a thoroughly puissant and commanding expression, but who could upon occasion smile very sweetly and speak in a gentle and winning tone. In costume he was the typical American of the last generation—the American who in the daytime always wore a black claw-hammer coat and continuations, a good deal of shirt-collar, and black neck-tie. "You will meet in the States,"

incidentally remarked Charles Dickens when I bade him good-bye in November, 1863, "many thousands of tall, sallow, silent men, in black tail-coats, who will chew and occasionally spit." The author of "Martin Chuzzlewit" was evidently thinking of the types of Transatlantic humanity with whom he had made acquaintance in 1842; but in 1863 such types were rapidly disappearing.

President Lincoln had a deservedly high reputation for saying droll things; but I must frankly admit that I never heard him tell any funny stories. The best of them have long since been circulated all over the world, together, I should say, with a vast number of other jokes attributed to him, but which he never made; and many of which may be traced to the repertory of Mr. Joseph Miller, if not to the much more ancient jest-book of the Greek Hierocles. I have not, however, for a long time met in print with what I hold to be one of the President's brightest achievements in the way of dry humour. Shortly after his installation at the White House, he received, among almost innumerable applications for office, a

lady, who very explicitly informed him that but for her unwearied exertions in the electoral district in which she resided he would have failed to obtain the majority which ultimately placed him in the Presidential chair; and on those grounds she peremptorily demanded for her husband, or her son, or some connection or another, either the Collectorship of the port of New York, or a Consulship, or a clerkship in a public office, or the keepership of a lighthouse, or some other appointment in the South. "I ask it, sir," she said, "because I consider that I and my family have been largely instrumental in bringing about your election as Chief Magistrate of the United States." "Is that so, Madam?" asked the President. "It is, sir." "Well," placidly replied Mr. Lincoln, "*you've got me into a nice mess, anyhow.*"

The next day I was received by Mr. William H. Seward, the Secretary of State, an elderly, spare gentleman, full of talk—and very admirable talk it was—the talk of a personage who was at once a lawyer, a statesman, and a man of the world, but who was by

no means devoid of intellectual culture or of artistic and literary sympathies. I had the good fortune to meet a few years ago with the nephew of Mr. Seward at the table of the Bishop of New York, then temporarily sojourning in Rome; and there was much in the second Mr. Seward's strain of converse to remind me of the fluent and instructive discourse of his eminent uncle. Whenever I am in the presence of a really great man I do my very best to hold my tongue; and now and again I strive quietly to incite my interlocutor to more and more talk. Not because I am anxious to "interview" him professionally—in that sense I never interviewed anybody in my life—but in order to learn something. When you leave off trying to learn something you had best retire to Sleepy Hollow, or to Nelson, New Zealand. I learned a great deal from listening to Mr. Seward's voluble utterances as he paced restlessly up and down his office; but I am afraid that the most serious impression that I carried away with me was that he and those who acted with him were of opinion that the English press were, as a body, the sworn and implacable enemies of the United

States, and that the correspondents despatched to New York and Washington by the leading organs of public opinion in England, and among whom had been Charles Mackay, Antonio Gallenga, William Howard Russell, and my unworthy self, were all bitter foes of the North and continually struggling to do her ill turns.

NOTE.—The reference to the British raid on Washington reminds me that in the Federal capital, in 1864, I met a very amiable old American gentleman, who was still proprietor of a newspaper, the offices of which had been gutted by General Ross's troops in August, 1814. The soldiery refrained from burning down the premises; but they smashed the presses and threw the types out of the windows. Lord Lyons was very fond of the old gentleman, who used to visit his Excellency every Sunday morning after church.

END OF VOL. I.

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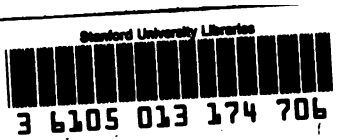

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